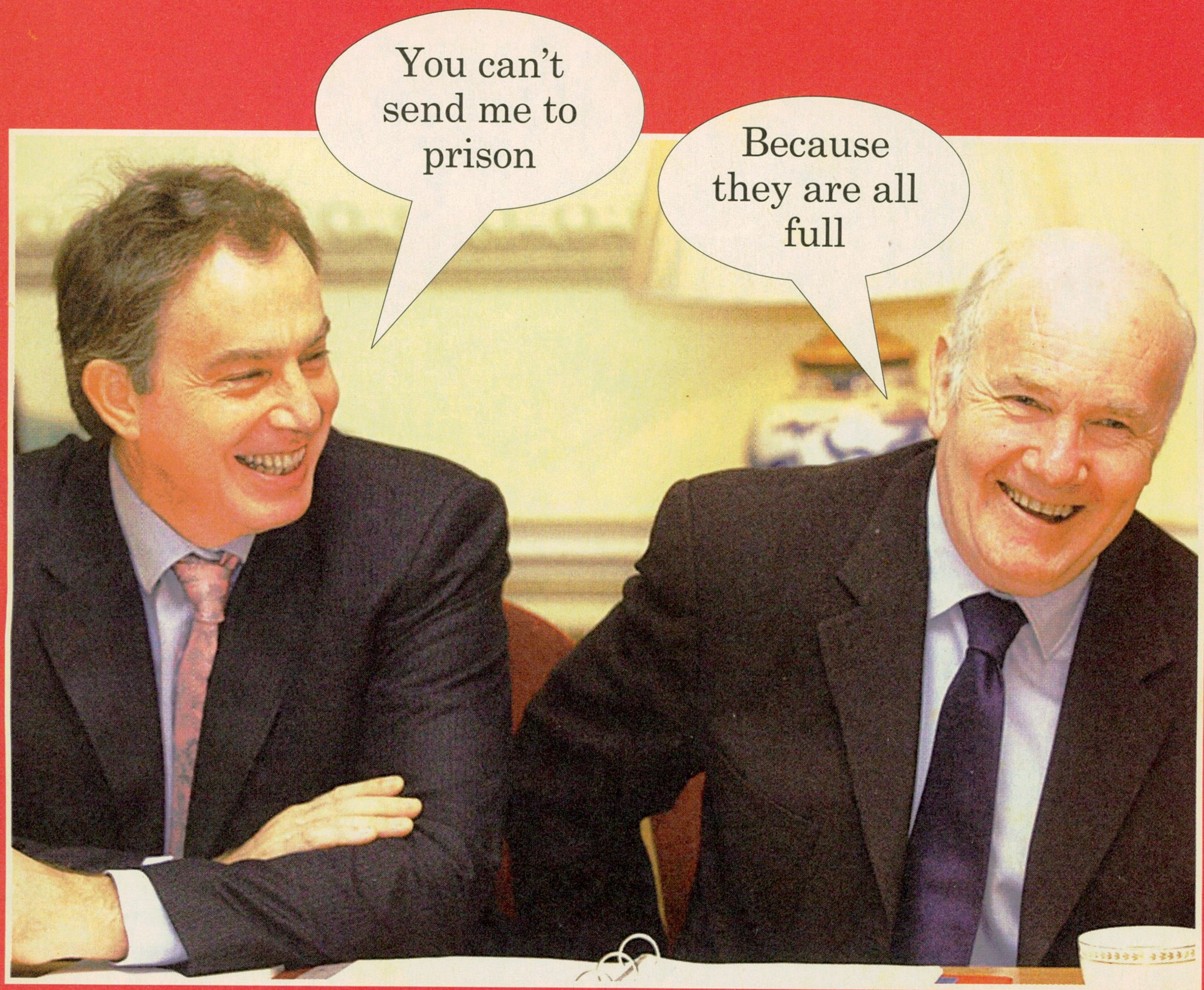
PRIVATE EYE

No. 1177
2 February –
15 Feb. 2007
£1.40

BLAIR ARREST LATEST



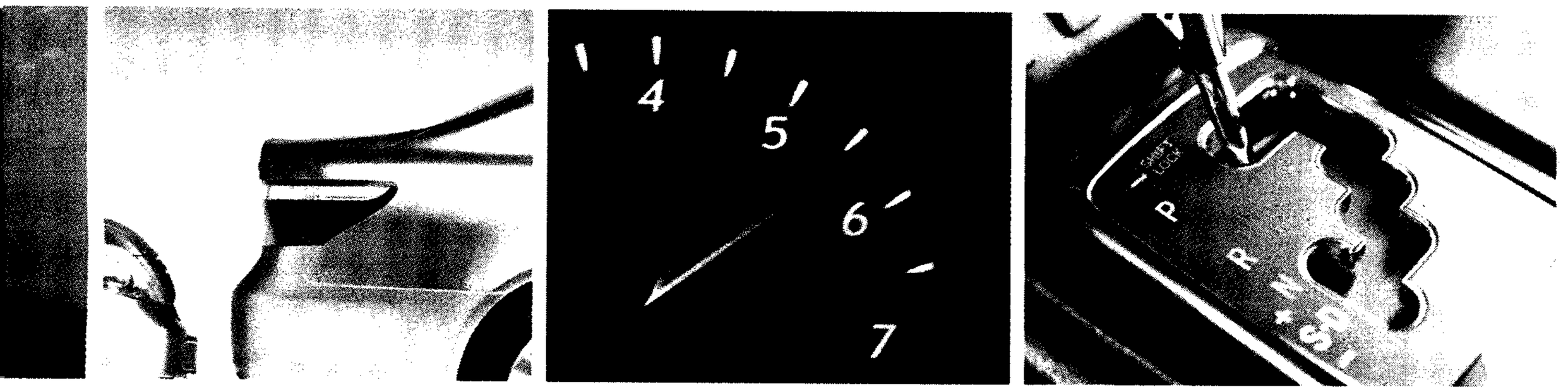
THE PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

A CAR THAT
EXTENDS YOUR
VISION TO SEE
UNSEEN OBSTACLES

A CAR THAT
KEEPS YOUR
EYES ON
THE ROAD

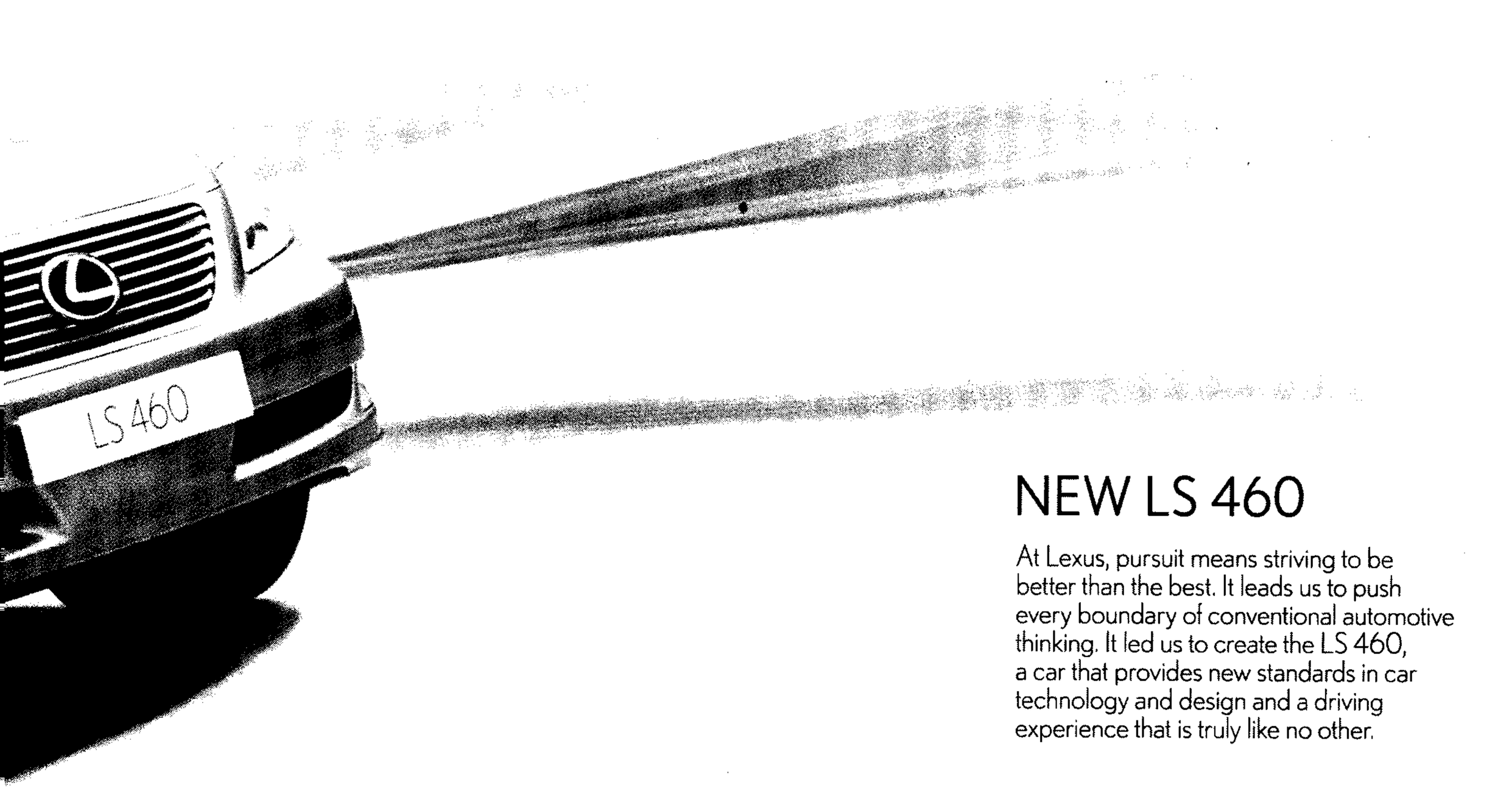
For more information, text PERFECTION to 60806, call 0845 601 9977 or visit www.lexus.co.uk/perfection

Model shown LS 460 £57,000 OTR. LS range prices start from £57,000 to £71,600. Prices correct at time of going to press and include VAT, delivery charges, number plates, full tank of fuel, one year's road fund licence and LS 460 fuel economy figures: extra-urban 35.8mpg (7.9L/100km), urban 17.1mpg (16.5L/100km), combined 25.4mpg (11.1L/100km). CO_2



A CAR
THAT CAN
VIRTUALLY
PARK ITSELF

THE WORLD'S
FIRST 8 SPEED
AUTOMATIC
TRANSMISSION

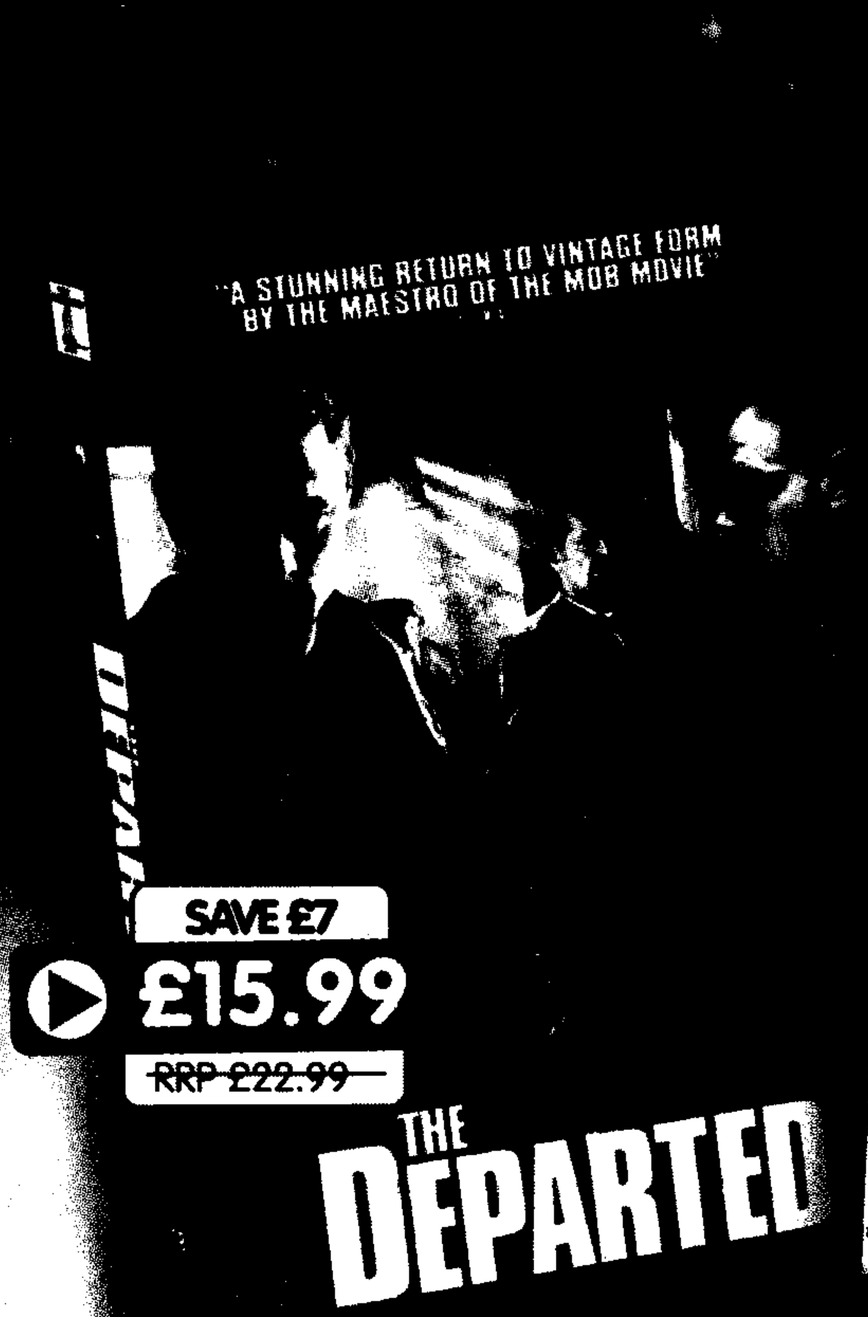


NEW LS 460

At Lexus, pursuit means striving to be better than the best. It leads us to push every boundary of conventional automotive thinking. It led us to create the LS 460, a car that provides new standards in car technology and design and a driving experience that is truly like no other.

LEXUS
The pursuit of perfection

tration fee. Calls to Lexus will be charged at local rate and may be monitored and recorded.
issions 261g/km.



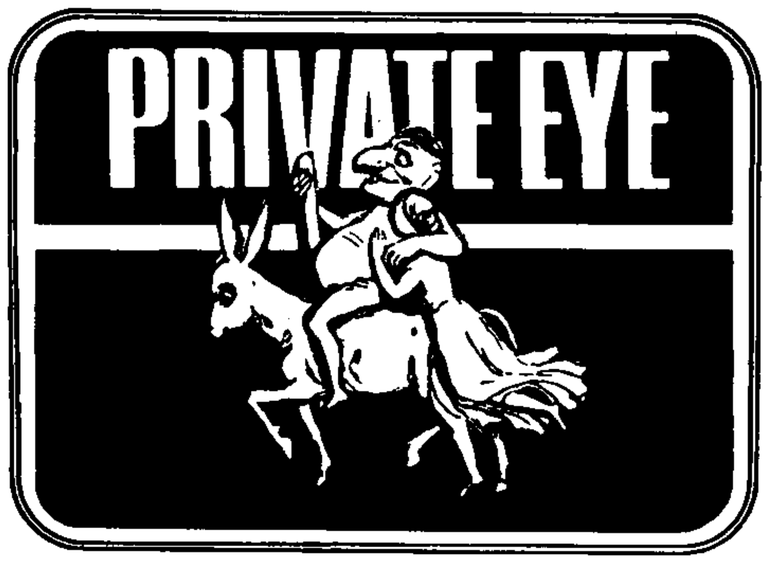
Now Showing Prices At...

PLAY.COM.

TIME TO PLAY.COM. FREE DELIVERY ON EVERYTHING

The Departed © 2006 Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. All rights reserved. The Prestige © 2007 Warner Bros. Ent. All Rights Reserved. *Artwork TBC
The Queen™ © 2007 Pathé Distribution Limited. All Rights Reserved. An Inconvenient Truth ™, © & Copyright © 2006 by Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved.
Volver © 2007 Pathé Distribution Limited. All Rights Reserved. Children of Men. © 2006 Universal Studios. All Rights Reserved.

Prices are correct at time of going to press. Play.com reserve the right to change prices.



THE government was rightly lambasted last week by a parliamentary committee for its mismanagement of the 2012 London Olympic finances since winning the games in July 2005. But the *Eye* has discovered that even as the crowds were erupting in Trafalgar Square two summers ago, the government knew the real costs bore no relation to those set out earlier that day in Lord Coe's decisive presentation to the International Olympic Committee.

According to the final cost review prepared for the government in July 2004 by consultants PricewaterhouseCoopers, marked "confidential" but obtained by the *Eye* under the Freedom of Information Act, the cost of preparing for the games would be £2.75bn. Since deciding to bid in early 2003, however, culture and sport secretary Tessa Jowell had repeatedly promised a public funding package of no more than £2.375bn – demanding a relatively limited national lottery contribution and politically manageable council tax rises. The more pessimistic 2004 cost estimate, itself based on some heroic assumptions and minimal contingencies despite "a number of significant risks", was simply sat on.

When London's "candidate file" was produced for IOC scrutiny a year later, costs had magically shrunk from PwC's estimates in order to make the sums work within the declared £2.375bn. Venues, for example, would cost £707m against PwC's estimate of £815m (which even by their reckoning was conservative).

The all too inevitable prospect of the price increasing from Jowell's promised £2.375bn was thus safely ignored until the games were in the bag. Unseemly rows over further raids on lottery funds or tax hikes before the winning bidder was announced were happily averted. In the process, however, London 2012 was sold to the public and the IOC on a financial lie – even before overlooked expenses like VAT emerged last year.

But as Lord Coe grandly declared in his 2007 New Year message: "It is not simply about cost. It is about value and ambition." So that's alright then.

P.S. The risibly low cost of London's bid was based on estimates for a "specimen" Olympic Games from consultants Arup in 2002. Having done so much to make the London Games possible by giving the impression of affordability, guess what happened to Arup? Yep – together with two other firms, last year it won the £59m contract to design the Olympic Park.

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.
Tel: 020 7437 4017. Fax: 020 7437 0705.
Email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk
Website: www.private-eye.co.uk

PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 01795 414 871
Overseas: +44 (0) 1795 414 870 Fax: 01795 414 555.
Web: www.private-eye.co.uk
Email: private-eye@dovetailservices.com

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£24 per annum. Europe and Eire £32. Airmail (rest of world) £38. Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
Display: 020 7878 2303 Classified: 020 7240 9129

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ. **Distributed** by P.E. Distributions, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. 020 7437 4017.

ABC

HOME SECRETARY John Reid was so desperate for the fall-out from the debacle surrounding the failure to log foreign convictions of British villains not to fall on him, that he personally took charge of the Home Office press office as it fended off inquiries from hacks.

Staff were astonished to see both Reid and his special adviser, Steve "Norman" Bates turn up on a Saturday night. But even the top men were unable to head off the awkward truth. At least one serious violent offender had gone on to carry out a gangland killing on his return to the UK and a further 80 had carried out less serious crimes. Ministers in Reid's office were aware there was a problem – and had done nothing about it.

"It's our new immigration policy – make everything so bad nobody'll want to come here."

Number crunching

350 ■ extra prison places Home Office plans to create by Spring

350 ■ extra prisoners sentenced in the past week

"BY 2015 every secondary school can be refurbished or rebuilt with world class technology in every school and the best state of the art learning support in every classroom," declared Gordon Brown in his 2004 budget speech.

Sadly the means of delivering the programme, "local education partnerships" using the private finance initiative, has proved far too complex. In the first year in which deals were due to be signed, 2005-06, none were – against a target of £2.2bn worth. To date only five deals have been agreed.

This hasn't dented Gordon's ambition, however: in budget and pre-budget reports since 2004 he has promised "new" schools investment totalling £100bn over the next few years – most of which is the same money announced on three separate occasions.

So far the schools building programme's greatest achievement has been to create work for PFI consultants and various publicly-funded bodies with suitably New Labour names including Building Schools for the Future, Partnerships for Schools, Partnerships UK, 4PS – not to mention the Treasury, Education department and countless local authorities. Now the people in charge are talking about the job taking more like 20 years.

Of all the Chancellor's extravagent budget promises, his cloud-cuckoo land schools plans look easily the most spurious.

Shortage of brain cells

- **Hacks: Star-raving bonkers** 7
- **How to win at *Big Brother*** 11
- **Trains: Winter snow shock** 12
- **In The Back: PFI defence training** 28
- **Health: Community nursing cuts** 30

"IT IS NOT true that the prime minister has done a deal with Rupert Murdoch to write a book after he leaves office," chief Downing Street spin-doctor David Hill writes in a typically tetchy letter to the *Daily Telegraph*. "He has done no book deal with Mr Murdoch or anyone else."

This is the same David Hill who on the morning of 14 December assured Joe Murphy of the *Evening Standard* that the PM was not due to be interviewed by Knacker of the Yard that day. When Murphy said he had good reason to think the interview would occur, Hill replied: "Forget it. Look, nothing at all has changed." Murphy persisted. Did Hill mean he didn't know, or was he categorically saying it wouldn't happen? "Look, nothing is happening. I think that's pretty unequivocal."

Indeed so – but also wholly untrue. It wasn't until after 1pm that No 10 admitted Blair was helping Knacker with his inquiries, by which time news bulletins were dominated by the Stevens report on Princess Diana.

Why does Hill think anyone will ever believe his denials again? The *Telegraph* didn't claim that Blair had an actual contract with Murdoch – merely an informal agreement. For all Hill's bluster, this does appear to be the case. Expect an announcement of the deal later this year.

JOINED-UP GOVERNMENT

September 2006: Gordon Brown tells Labour Party conference that immigrants must take English lessons: "Let me say something which I know is controversial but I know needs to be said: If we are to uphold these values that matter most, we need not only respect for all traditions but also a common language... It is right that people who come to and are in this country to stay learn English."

January 2007: Department for Education cuts funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages courses.

Tessa Jowell's Healthy Gambling

Street Of Shame

COLIN MYLER, successor to Andy Coulson as editor of the *News of the Screws*, has of course run a Sunday tabloid before. In his first stint as editor of the *Sunday Mirror*, from 1992 to 1994, it was he who published notorious sneak-photos of Princess Diana in a gym – which cost the paper a fortune in a reader backlash and an advertiser boycott.

He survived thanks to his patron David "Rommel" Montgomery, who had been equally enthusiastic about forking out £70,000 for the photographs. Indeed he was actually promoted to edit the *Daily Mirror* – where he proved a lacklustre flop and was replaced only a year later by another Rommel protégé, Piers Moron. Montgomery gave Myler a £500,000 pay-off on condition he never told the full embarrassing story of the Diana pictures.

To general amazement, Rommel later brought Myler back to edit the *Sunday Mirror* once again – where, again, he brought shame and disaster on the paper, earning the nickname "Monty-zuma's revenge". In 2001 he was eventually forced to resign, and the *Mirror* was fined £75,000 for contempt of court, after sabotaging the trial of two Leeds footballers by printing an interview with the father of the Asian youth they were accused of assaulting.

Clearly, the *News of the Screws* needs an editor of clean hands and unblemished reputation to clear up the stinking Augean mess created over the past year by Clive Goodman and the Fake Sheikh. Who better than Colin Myler?

THE *News of the Screws* has taken several big hits from football stars lately, having to pay substantial damages to both Wayne Rooney and Ashley Cole for untrue stories. One of the paper's hacks was also caught listening in to the mobile phone of Sol Campbell's agent.

So glee was unconfined two weeks ago when *Screws* executives realised they had broken one of the biggest sports stories of the year – David Beckham's megabucks move to America to play for LA Galaxy. But joy soon turned to horror when they remembered the writer behind the scoop was senior sports hack Matt Driscoll.

Driscoll's story, published as long ago as April 2005, revealed that Beckham had been approached by bosses of Anschutz Entertainment Group, who wanted him to end his career playing for LA Galaxy. "Money is no object for them," Driscoll's source said, "and they see Beckham as the figure to get more people watching Major League Soccer." They were willing to wait for two or three years until he was ready.

Now it has come to pass, but the *Screws* couldn't boast about its prescience with a rag-out of Driscoll's exclusive: it has just made him redundant. Adding insult to injury, it replaced him with football hack Rob Shepherd – who in January 2004 was given a 14-month jail sentence for violently assaulting a man in a wine-bar.

THE spotlight fell on Richard Desmond at a recent charity bash starring stand-up comic and TV presenter Jimmy Carr.

The funny man's routine includes having a go at random audience members, and soon enough his ready wit alighted upon the Express Newspapers chairman. Not best pleased at being singled out for a little piss-taking in front of the great and good of the Jewish community, Dirty Des expressed his disapproval with a few choice Anglo-Saxon phrases.

Alas, Jimmy Carr enjoyed the last laugh, turning to the audience during Desmond's heckles and declaring: "Well, he's a fucking funny cunt, isn't he!"

EVEN his own colleagues aren't safe from the investigative zeal of *Mail* diarist Richard Kay: last Thursday he led his page with the news that Carol Vorderman had split from her lover, *Mail* sports columnist Des Kelly.

But rival editors are more fortunate. Paul Dacre has decreed that neither Kay nor anyone else at the *Mail* can report the news that *Sun* editor Rebekah Wade has separated from her bullet-headed hubby, Ross Kemp.

No other newspaper dares cover the story either. A few quick phone calls round the street of shame by News International boss Les Hinton, invoking the old pals' act, were enough to ensure complete silence.

In the property supplement of last Wednesday's *Evening Standard*, above a brief interview with Ross Kemp on the joys of south London, the paper claimed that he "lives in Battersea with his wife, *Sun* editor Rebekah Wade". In fact Rebekah has moved to Chelsea, while Ross stays put. (She has also taken off her wedding ring and written him out of her entry in *Debrett's People of Today*.) How long can Fleet Street pretend otherwise?

FIVE families have joined together to sue the company behind an internet site that enabled paedophiles to groom and sexually assault their children – one of whom was drugged by a man who has since been jailed for 10 years – in the hope that it will be "spurred into action and prevent this happening to another child somewhere".

Surely this is a perfect story for Rebekah Wade's perv-hating name'n'shame-sheet, the *Sun?*

Apparently not. Despite coverage in the *Guardian* and *Telegraph*, the *Sun* failed to cover the legal action brought in the US this month against MySpace and its owners, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation – while sister papers the *News of the World*, *Times* and *Sunday Times* also remained oddly silent on the matter.

"I CONFESS to finding the *Sunday Times* both unloveable and unexciting," confessed the *Guardian*'s new media pundit Peter Wilby on 22 January.

His long, gloomy dissection of the paper noted that it had suffered a sharp circulation fall since putting up its cover price last September. He also damned editor John Witherow with faint praise, as "amiable" but uninspired.

Revenge was immediate. "Who Guards the *Guardian*? How the paper's relaunch has foundered," was the headline blazoned across the front of the *Sunday Times* business section last weekend. Inside was a half-page "story" rejoicing that the *Grauniad* was hopelessly in the doldrums, "with no obvious solution in sight". Editor Alan Rusbridger was damned with faint praise, as "mild-mannered" but "increasingly distracted".

Boys! *Boys!*

FORMER Home Office adviser Kath Raymond wrote a column for the *Sun* last Friday praising the paper's campaign about crime and prisons. She urged her former colleagues "to look again at the options put forward by the *Sun*".

No doubt editor Rebekah Wade can expect congratulations from News International chairman Les Hinton for recruiting this brilliant new pundit: Kath Raymond is Hinton's lover.

HOW THOUGHTFUL of the *Independent* to run a "Save & Spend" special on how to achieve a complete career change, just two days after announcing it would be making massive redundancies.

Nervous *Indy* hacks are now studying it intently.

Rubbing salt in the wound, the newsagent down the road from the *Indy* has just got in a huge display of "Sorry you're leaving" cards. Smart work!

"MUSLIMS stopped our soldiers choosing where to live. It's a disgrace," thundered the *Sun* in October, over the front-page news that a house in Windsor had been wrecked by what the paper called "Muslim yobs".

"Four young Household Cavalry officers who had planned to rent it were also the target of phone THREATS," shrieked the paper. "They were yesterday forced to look elsewhere to live… Sources inside Windsor's Combermere Barracks – where the officers are based – confirmed Muslims had made calls threatening the men."

On Monday 15 January – a mere three months after the *Ascot Windsor & Eton Express* reported that the vandalism was thought to be connected to local residents' concerns that a squaddie houseshare would adversely affect property prices – the *Sun* amended their story slightly with a small piece on the bottom of page 4. "We have been asked to point out no threatening calls were logged at Combermere Barracks from Muslims and police have been unable to establish if any faith or religious group was responsible for the incident. We are happy to make this clear."

That done, the paper could get on with the week's main work – berating Jade Goody for her ignorance and prejudice against Asians.

SUPERMODELS KERBER

SKINNY MODELS NOT BANNED FROM FASHION WEEK
OF COURSE NOT!
…WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN WEAR THIS RIDICULOUS STUFF!!!
DRESSES
TROUSERS

HOW JOURNALISM WORKS, PT 94.

THE phone didn't stop ringing for hours the night Iraq veteran Justin Smith gave Tony Blair a piece of his mind on TV.

The former Coldstream Guardsman, who served two tours in Basra, was medically discharged last year suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. On Thursday 11 January he and members of other service families appeared on ITV Westcountry in a live half-hour debate with the Prime Minister. The former lance-corporal, who is married with three children, told Blair how after nine years in the Army he felt let down by the government, with no financial or medical support, and was forced to live in damp, expensive temporary accommodation in Cornwall.

He also took the PM to task for sending the troops to war with inadequate equipment.

Almost as soon as the programme was over, the calls came flooding in: the *Times*, the *Guardian*, the *Independent,* Sky and the *Mail on Sunday*. The *Daily Mail* offered £6,000 for an exclusive interview about Justin's Iraq experiences. The *Sun,* so desperate for the story that hacks phoned at 3.30 in the morning, offered £10,000, which he agreed to.

When the *Sun* arrived to conduct the interview on the Friday morning, however, they were greeted by hacks working for their sister paper, the *News of the World*. The *Screws*, declaring it would "top any offer" from rivals, had faxed a contract for £15,000 and dispatched a reporter and photographer from the South West News agency, based in Plymouth, to the Smiths' home near Falmouth.

A payment of £15,000 would transform the lives of Justin, 32, his wife Paula and their three children. A local British Legion welfare officer advised Justin and Paula to accept.

They spent the day with a reporter called Lucy from South West News, who constantly referred back on the phone to *NoW* hack Rob Kellaway – the man who had signed the contract. Less than an hour after the interview was over, however, Kellaway called to say that the *Screws* didn't think the story was worth £15,000 after all. The paper would pay £1,000 or "£1,500 at a stretch". When the Smiths protested to the *NoW* that they had a contract, Kellaway quoted a clause which read "payment is … subject to the editor's approval". The Smiths told the *NoW* to get lost.

Paula Smith says: "I believe they only made that offer to get rid of the others. Maybe they never intended to pay it. They are really, really shitty people. I had no idea that was how journalists behaved."

GOBLIN-FACED astrologer Jonathan Cainer has been thrilling *Daily Mail* readers with an epic series on "the comet of destiny", aka Comet McNaught. "It is a rare and wonderful comet, the most dramatic to grace our skies since 1997," he raves. "That last astronomical apparition was given the unlikely name of Hale-Bopp. It hung in the heavens night after night, eerily portending the death of Diana, Princess of Wales."

Shome mishtake, shurely? In April 1997 Cainer scuttled off to the Far East to "consult the distant guardian of an ancient prophecy" about the significance of Hale-Bopp. On his return, the ecstatic hack shared his findings with *Mail* readers: "The key point is that I have seen proof that Comet Hale-Bopp is a truly global herald – with as many positive implications for the future of the East as it has for the West … Comet Hale-Bopp's message to the world can be summed up in one word: Awakening." If in fact it was eerily portending the death of Diana, why didn't the omniscient stargazer mention it at the time?

Now he warns that Comet McNaught may also "prove inauspicious for the royal family". If he's wrong, no doubt he can rely on the short memories of *Mail* readers to save him from further embarrassment. If only they weren't so forgetful, some might recall what he wrote at the time of the solar eclipse in August 1999: "What if this eclipse really does spell the beginning of the end of the world? … What if, as we all stare hopefully upwards at the sky, a ladder descends from the heavens? What if the creator steps gracefully down it to walk among us all in human form once more?" Cainer's own guess was that "the eclipse does indeed herald an imminent day of judgment".

With scoops like that to his credit, is it any wonder that Cainer is the highest-paid hack in Fleet Street?

THE STRANGE CASE OF THE PROFESSOR, THE SUNDAY TIMES AND THE GAY SHEEP

PANIC STATIONS at the *Sunday Times*, where newsdesk executives Mark "Skippy" Skipworth and Nicholas Hellen are running for cover after finding themselves on the receiving end of an investigation by the mighty *New York Times*.

The trouble began on New Year's Eve when the clueless twosome oversaw a *Sunday Times* story headlined: "Science Told: Hands Off Gay Sheep." It reported that an American scientist, Professor Charles Roselli, was conducting cruel experiments to "cure" gay sheep, "in a programme that critics fear could pave the way for breeding out homosexuality in humans".

The sensational story was picked up all over the world, enraging gays and delighting conservatives. But it was science fiction.

The first hint that it might be rather shaky came from the bylines: Isabel Oakeshott, the deputy political editor, and Chris Gourlay, a graduate fresh out of Leeds University who had started work as a trainee hack just a few weeks before. They described in gruesome detail how "the animals' skulls are cut open and electronic sensors are attached to their brains", and claimed that Roselli had succeeded in "altering the rams' sexuality, with some previously gay animals becoming attracted to ewes".

None of this was true – as is clear from Roselli's research papers, which are freely available via the Internet from *Endocrine* and *Endocrinology*, the two academic journals where he published them. What he actually did initially was simply to observe the mating behaviour of sheep and record the results, finding that about 8 percent of rams preferred other rams to ewes. In a second piece of research he had tried to alter the preferences of *heterosexual* rams by injecting substances that block sex hormones into their blood (not brains) – but failed. As he has noted, "basic biological research like ours is directed at understanding important relationships between physiology and behaviour, not finding cures". Indeed, if his results tend to suggest that homosexuality is innate, they might actually be useful evidence for pro-gay campaigners.

What turned the story into far more than a piece of bizarre animal research, however, was the *Sunday Times*'s warning that the work had not only succeeded in "curing" gay sheep but could lead to a similar "cure" for human homosexuals. "It raises the prospect that pregnant women could one day be offered a treatment to reduce or eliminate the chance that their offspring will be homosexual," the paper claimed. "Experts say that, in theory, the 'straightening' procedure on humans could be as simple as a hormone supplement for mothers-to-be, worn on the skin like an anti-nicotine smoking patch."

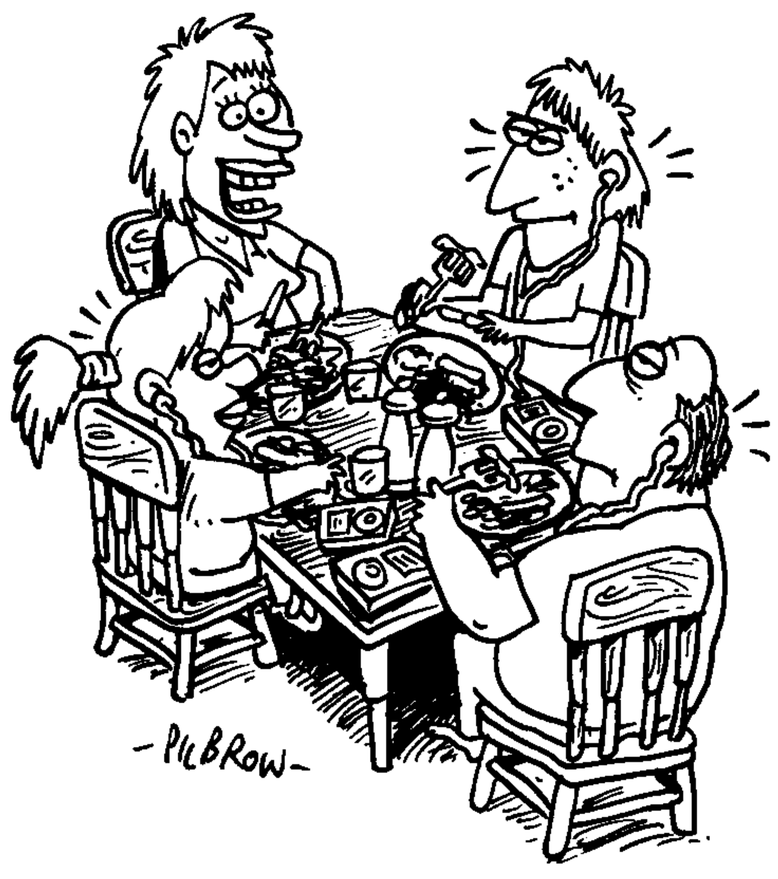
None of these experts was named, probably because they don't exist. The source for the *Sunday Times* story was a press release issued six months ago by the animal-rights group PETA – whose misrepresentation of Roselli's work was swiftly exposed and debunked.

In a long and damning account of the affair last week, the *New York Times* concluded that "the story of the gay sheep became a textbook example of the distortion and vituperation that can result when science meets the global news cycle". It also observed that "the authors of the *Sunday Times* article, Isabel Oakeshott and Chris Gourlay, referred questions to a managing editor, who they said was travelling and could not be reached".

Other foreign papers which picked up the original story have also printed retractions. The *National Post* in Canada ran an indignant piece last week by a columnist who had fallen for the "farrago of misleading data" served up from Wapping. "One looks out for this sort of deception when surfing blogs and obscure news sites, but it is highly unusual to see it happen at a respected, world-class newspaper such as the *Sunday Times* of London." (Not that unusual: don't the Canadians know this is the paper which gave us the Hitler Diaries?)

It seems Oakeshott is none too happy either, given that her usual beat is the Palace of Westminster (where one of her most regular sources is her uncle, Lib Dem peer Lord Oakeshott). The gay-sheep project was foisted on her and Gourlay after being dreamt up by Skipworth and Hellen.

But editor John Witherow may be most furious of all, demanding why Skipworth and Hellen asked an inexperienced trainee and a political hack to write about a subject with such complex scientific, medical and social implications. When Witherow finally got round to printing a correction last weekend, apologising for "errors and any subsequent confusions", he added pointedly that "the authors of our report were not science specialists and we should have ensured that the story was checked by the science editor before publication". Last week's *New York Times* exposé was read with interest by his bosses at News Corp, whose HQ is in Manhattan. He can only hope that the Dirty Digger will laugh it off with the same line he used when defending his publication of the bogus Hitler diaries: "After all, we are in the entertainment business!"



"There – isn't that better? A nice family meal together for once"

RUTH TURNER, the Downing Street adviser who had her collar felt by Knacker in the course of his investigations into the loans for peerages affair, is not the only member of her circle to be having a fraught time lately.

A week before Turner's arrest her friend and former business partner, Simon Danczuk, with whom in 1999 she founded Vision21, a "social research company" used by public bodies, opened his door to find two funeral wreaths. One was a six-foot white cross, while the other featured his name tastefully picked out in flowers, gangland funeral style (see below).

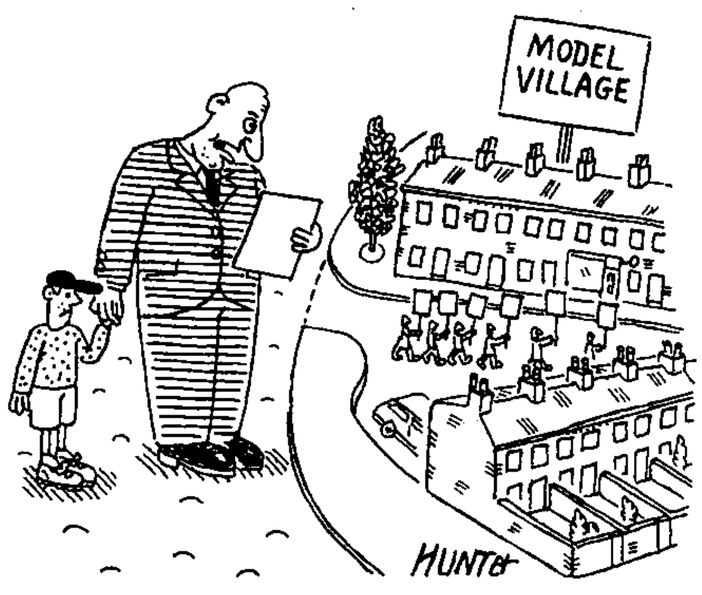
Who on earth might have it in for the mild-mannered consultant?

A clue may lie in the fact that Mr Danczuk is the Labour party's prospective parliamentary candidate for Rochdale at the next general election. That this is not a prospect greeted with enthusiasm by all in the north-west was made apparent last year when Mr Danczuk, prior to his selection, received an anonymous telephone call from a man who told him that, if he did not withdraw from the race, his "bodyparts would be strewn across the M6 motorway".

Such incidents would tend to support what Labour head office describes as the Rochdale Labour party's "dysfunctional" reputation.

On 6 January party officials were forced to temporarily suspend the selection process because of balloting irregularities. In November the local party had passed a vote of no confidence because some rival candidates felt the vote was a stitch-up – namely that Mr Danczuk enjoyed the overwhelming support of Downing Street as well as the regional Labour party, which had chosen his Vision21 company to administer questionnaires sent to local Labour members earlier in the year.

Mr Danczuk's enemy, however, appears to be thick as well as sick. The *Eye*'s mole at the heart of the investigation reveals that the person who ordered the floral tributes did so using a credit card. So even Greater Manchester Police should be able to crack this one!



"It's a demo against the Post Office closures"

CALLED TO ORDURE

BY DUCKING out of the big Commons debate on Iraq, Tony Blair saved himself the ordeal of listening to Margaret Beckett at her most leathery. The Foreign Secretary spoke for 40 minutes, bulletproof but boring as she dwelt on "the Arab Street".

She told the House that the Iraq government was incredibly popular and that only 12,500 Iraqis were killed last year – not the 665,000 cited by the Lancet and the Commons library, nor even the 150,000 mentioned by the Iraqi minister of health.

Had he been there, though, the Prime Minister might have enjoyed some of the debate's rampant one-upmanship as MPs boasted about their length of service in the House. At times it had a real "mine's bigger than yours" feel to it. There were also pleasing instances of inter-party fighting – always something to cheer the soul.

Blair legged it from the Chamber even before the debate began. "Bye!" shouted opposition MPs. "He's off! He's leaving the country!"

Labour backbenchers looked pretty pissed off. Without Blair the debate might gain less damaging airtime on the TV news, but if the PM had made a speech it might have personalised the issue, drawing some of the flak away from their party.

Within minutes oh-so-experienced Sir Malcolm Rifkind (Con, Kensington & Chelsea), sometime Foreign Secretary and first an MP in 1974, was complaining about the PM's absence. Beckett, also an MP since 1974 and a minister in Harold Wilson's last government, looked at Rifkind with disgust. "I have been in the House long enough, and have a good enough memory, to recall on how many occasions Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher addressed the House," she snapped, almost spitting the words past her horsey teeth. Cue much Tory chuntering and crossness.

Ming Campbell has only been an MP since 1987 but he behaves as though he was a frontbencher in the era of Asquith. During his (actually not bad) speech he was challenged at one point by Tory Bernard Jenkin. "I shall leave others to form a judgment about my attitudes and approach to foreign affairs over the nearly 20 years that I have been in this House of Commons," said Ming, so pious he almost popped.

Jane Kennedy (Lab, Wavertree) dared to criticise Ming, including the words "notwithstanding his long service in the House". All this seemed to prove too much for Ann Clwyd (Lab, Cynon Valley), who, in the course of a laughably self-regarding speech, said she had been an MP for 23 years. Bully for you, Ann. Cue a distant roll of drums, a tinkle of cymbals, and Dame Gerald Kaufman (Lab, Manchester Gorton) was up on his delicate hooves to remind everyone that he was first elected to Parliament in June 1970. In all that time, he added, he had never voted against the Labour Whip – but he was prepared to do so if the government now took any military action against Iran. It is hard to know which is the more striking fact here: that Dame Gerry has lasted 37 years in the Commons or that he has kept brown-nosing for all that time, never once finding a matter of principle on which to rebel.

One of Ming Campbell's best moments came when he squashed neo-con and war hawk Michael Gove (Con, Surrey Heath). His success in doing this was cheered not least by some of Gove's Tory colleagues who were delighted to see the ambitious young shaver made to look a fool. Party tensions were no less evident on the Labour benches. Anti-war Frank Dobson (Holborn & St Pancras) was sharply dismissive of his Plymouth colleague Linda Gilroy. And ex-defence minister Peter Kilfoyle, critical of the war, referred to pro-Israel Jane Kennedy as "risible". Kennedy, once a close friend of ex-defence secretary Geoff Hoon, has been highly visible recently, sucking up to both Blair and Gordon Brown. She may be after a job in the House of Lords.

Things were getting so bad tempered that Iain Duncan Smith – yes, the Quiet Man himself – lost his rag. In the course of a fluent pro-war speech he was twice interrupted by burly Lib Dem baronet Sir Robert Smith. Dunkers positively flew at the man, shouting, "he can sit down – he will get his own chance in due course". The mood even infected Richard Younger-Ross (Lib Dem, Teignbridge), one of the wettest and most mocked (deservedly so) men at Westminster. When challenged by newish Tory Anne Main (St Albans) the absurd Younger-Ross squealed that, "when the hon Lady has been here longer" she might learn to ask better questions. Younger-Ross himself has only been an MP since 2001, God help us.

They were all trumped by Sir Peter Tapsell (Con, Louth). The 76-year old Tory knight explained that he knew what he was talking about on foreign policy because "my father fought in the third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919". Ming Campbell, of course, was ruled out of joining that particular campaign, being narrowly too old to go to the front.

'Gavel Basher'

NEW LABOUR'S love affair with gambling is not confined to the introduction of super-casinos and milking the national lottery. It also extends to assisting High Street bookmakers in fleecing punters who have a flutter on the gee-gees.

How much profit bookies make out of horse racing depends on how the starting price (SP) of a horse is determined. The body responsible for overseeing how SPs are arrived at is the Starting Price Regulatory Commission (SPRC), chaired by Labour peer Lord Donoughue.

Intensive lobbying by the large bookmaking firms to manipulate the way SPs are determined in their favour paid dividends last November, when the SPRC gave the bookies everything they wanted.

In the first month following the change bookmakers' margins rocketed by 20 per cent, the next month, December, they rose by a further 21 per cent. Labour MP Alan Meale, a member of the All Party Racing and Bloodstock Group, says the situation "beggars belief". SNP leader Alex Salmond has called for an immediate investigation and claims the situation is "an effective management of SPs against the public interest … those responsible should be hanging their heads in shame". Donoughue, however, remains utterly unabashed and has said he sees nothing wrong with the new system.

PS: Donoughue's entry in the House of Lords register of interests, under "hospitality and gifts", records visits to Ascot and Cheltenham racecourses courtesy of bookmakers Coral, Ladbrokes and Tote. He was entertained by Ladbrokes at the Cheltenham Festival in 2004, 2005 and 2006, enjoyed visits to Royal Ascot courtesy of Coral in the same years, and was guest of the Tote at the Royal meeting in 2004 and 2006. All in the cause of disinterested fact-finding, of course.

DAVID BENNETT, the head of the Prime Minister's policy directorate, has drawn up a plan of reforms designed to consolidate the Blair revolution for another decade, according to the *Sunday Times*. Bennett calls for a "clean-sheet redesign of Whitehall", resulting in "a radical (50 percent plus) downsizing", with the private sector lined up for a key role in running government business.

This will be music to the ears of the consultants who are cleaning up in the re-design of Whitehall – none more so than McKinsey's, who are already pocketing millions from government departments such as health and defence, as well as overseeing private finance initiatives at HM Revenue and Customs (*Eyes passim*).

And at which management consultancy was Bennett a partner before being drafted into Number 10? McKinsey's, naturally.

"FOOD AND VALUES – the organic future" was the theme of the *Food Standards Agency*-sponsored City Food lecture at London's Guildhall last week.

While main speaker Peter Melchett of he Soil Association and panellists talked of environmental and animal welfare concerns, the audience supped wine and soft drinks sponsored by the most boycotted food company in the UK – Nestlé!

CRIMINAL RECORD

A WELSH GP whose criminal record check mistakenly said he had committed a drugs offence in the 1970s is still trying to clear his name, 10 months after the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) promised to look into it "urgently".

Dr David Jenkins' CRB disclosure certificate listed a conviction for possessing cannabis in Loughborough in 1975. The David Jenkins who committed the offence shares a birthday with the doctor (but in a different year) doesn't have the same middle initials and has a different place of birth. And Dr Jenkins knows that he has no such record on the Police National Computer as he holds a firearm licence.

The doctor says that he is lucky that he doesn't actually need the CRB clearance to carry on working in the village practice where he has been for many years, but says it does stop him from working for the out-of-hours GP service and he was recently unable to act as a volunteer on a trip for disabled children because of it.

After the mix-up was covered in his local paper and in the GPs' magazine *Pulse* in 2005, the CRB said it could clear up the record with a fingerprint check, but then told Dr Jenkins that there were no fingerprints on record for the crime anyway. He says he doesn't want to give them his fingerprints to keep on file for no good reason. He last had a letter from the CRB 10 months ago, promising to deal with the issue "urgently", but he says he has heard nothing since.

The *Eye* asked the CRB (via the Home Office) why it was taking so long to clear up the mistake. Answer came there none.

"It's ok to be raised by wolves, so long as they're not gay"

NEWS FROM THE SANDPIT

British patrols in Basra are now arresting Iranian nationals on a daily basis. The mortar round that killed five school children in western Baghdad on 28 January carried Iranian markings. On the same day, a source at the 1 Bn Royal Green Jacket battle group in Basra confirmed that the 500 mortar rounds captured by British troops were also made in Iran.

But Iraq is not the only theatre where Iranian ammo and troops are routinely apprehended. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard crosses the border into Afghanistan regularly. The Italian contingent of the ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) based at Herat in the far west of the country can do little to stop them because their rules of engagement require them to stay in their barracks, out of harm's way. They report the Iranian presence to NATO/ISAF Headquarters, and it is subsequently lied about to reporters at press conferences.

Iranian money, equipment and troops are pouring into both Iraq and Afghanistan. Iranians are also training "insurgents" in both Iran and Pakistan.

In Iraq, the Septics have nabbed the director of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards faction responsible for funding and arming Iraqi militants, and now the Chimp-in-Chief has sanctioned the use of "deadly force" against any Iranian assets encountered in theatre.

But why has it taken so long for the coalition to admit the extent of Iranian influence in both countries? Evidence of "problem creep"? The scary view from Camp Bastion is that Operation Persian Freedom is drawing ever closer…

'Square Basher'

Church News

MANY *Guardian* readers may have missed a tiny item at the foot of the "Corrections and Clarifications" column last Saturday. It noted that a feature by the Archbishop of York which appeared in the paper on 30 December "drew extensively on an article posted on the website of the Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University, California. This should have been acknowledged".

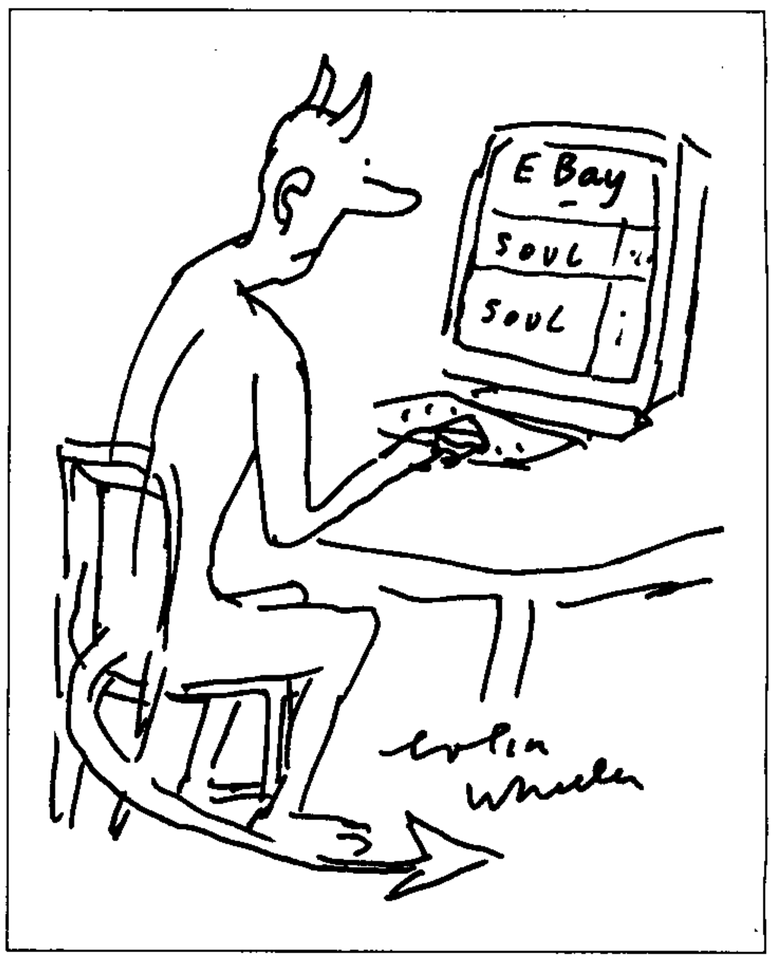
Indeed it should. In the first two-thirds of his *Grauniad* article Dr Sentamu didn't merely "draw extensively" on an article by Jesuit academics in the US, posted on a university website: he simply reproduced it verbatim, presenting it as his own work.

When this was pointed out to the *Guardian*, one of Sentamu's minions came up with a desperate excuse: that in writing the piece the archbish had reheated a lecture given three years ago, when he was bishop of Birmingham, on the basis of material supplied by a "researcher". Even if true, this seems a remarkable admission for such a very senior churchman: that he gets junior interns to write his lectures, delivers them without changing a word, and then regurgitates them three years later (still unchanged) as a column for the *Guardian* god-slot.

No less alarming are the final three paragraphs of the *Guardian* article, the only ones he may have written himself. After claiming that the Cambridge economist Joan Robinson once told a student to "forget all that ethics rubbish", Dr Sentamu lamented: "Regrettably, this attitude is now the norm." Economics was now "divorced from moral considerations" and universities' economics departments "have become a spiritually arid, barren wasteland".

All very moving – except that the source of the Joan Robinson anecdote is the student in question, Amartya Sen, who went on to win a Nobel prize in the discipline for his work in, er, ethics. Hardly proof that economists have all turned their back on ethical considerations…

What was that parable about motes and beans again?



POSTCARD FROM ULSTER

EVEN at this late stage in his regime's decline, Blair continues to extend summary justice and police surveillance powers into almost every aspect of daily life. But there's one notable exception: the IRA and its franchisees.

In his desperation to get Gerry Adams to offer much-qualified support for the rule of law – thereby appeasing Ian Paisley and his Democratic Unionist Party – Blair promised that the rules won't be enforced too strictly (although the Garda may have other ideas further south). The decision in January to abolish the UK-wide Assets Recovery Agency (ARA), which was set up to confiscate the proceeds of crime, was partly taken because it wasn't possible to close down its Ulster operation without axing the whole body. Predictably, the IRA knew about – and was publicly celebrating – this craven act before the House of Commons was informed, a fact that reflects Blair's priorities.

The ARA – which seized £16m worth of illegal money and goods last year – was set up following the success of Ireland's Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB), established in the aftermath of Veronica Guerin's assassination.

A Dublin libel jury ruled that Tom "Slab" Murphy, a farmer whose land straddles the partition line, was actually the IRA's ultimate Godfather and controlled a vast criminal empire. The ARA then seized all those houses in Manchester as part of a massive investigation into money laundering and mortgage fraud linked to the IRA. Subsequently, the CAB confiscated nearly a million's worth of banknotes and cheques found under some farmyard hay. But then Blair abolished the ARA, and Gerry Adams has succeeded in getting a Sinn Féin vote endorsing the hated Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Garda.

Blair used to argue that the IRA would eventually disband, with its members transferring to a commemorative organisation, a parody of the British Legion. His latest concessions guarantee that won't happen. Instead, it will remain intact, with a wealth estimated in nine figures and massive property and commercial assets across the island and beyond.

The Pretty Straight Sort of Guy doesn't mind. The legacy is the important thing, and when the inevitable publishing deal with HarperCollins is signed off, the first volume will no doubt concentrate on how Tony, unlike all his less gifted predecessors, personally solved The Irish Question.

● Happy Birthday to the Saville Inquiry, which is nine years old today and has cost a mere £400 million. Sadly, Tony Blair, having set it up, won't be prime minister when it delivers – if ever.

TV

Party Animals (BBC2)

THE 10th anniversary episode of *This Life*, shown at the start of the year, may have been piss-poor, but the mid-90s drama about twenty-somethings shagging remains amazingly influential.

As channel controllers struggle with the problem that young people don't watch television, their solution is generally to commission a show about fit professionals having sex. BBC1 had *Spooks*, a sort of espionage *This Life*, and now BBC2 gets *Party Animals*, a Westminster rip-off of the same formula.

Created by the indie company that made *This Life*, *Party Animals* is so indebted to the mothershow that it even has virtually the same characters, although the briefs the characters are dealing with are political rather than legal. As in *This Life*, there's a handsome one, a daffy one, a ball-breaker one and an Asian one.

The Anna-equivalent is Jo, a brisk Labour minister with a cleavage as alarmingly deep as her tongue is frighteningly sharp, who employs as a researcher Danny, the Egg-simulacrum, a dreamer who keeps making mistakes and getting legged over by cleverer rivals. The Milly here is Ashika, an Asian babe who advises and researches for a Miles-type, James, the Tory who shadows Jo's portfolio. Although, executives being even more desperate to get sex on screen than when *This Life* was made, this is a two-Miles run, with raffish cad duties being shared by Scott, a lobbyist, who also happens to be Danny's brother.

The theme is also familiar from the 80s model, the plots

"Can you find the words hidden in our puzzle?"

revolving around people being screwed in their jobs and then screwed in their beds, often by the same characters. The attitude is insistently cynical. Politicians are the puppets of their young assistants, who are in turn the playthings of lobbyists.

The biggest problem of the series is that it veers between plodding documentary and ridiculous inaccuracy. The entire plot of the second episode – in which the filming of a TV drama based on a racially controversial book causes trouble in a constituency – is lifted directly from the recent fuss in the East End over a production based on Monica Ali's *Brick Lane*. And yet such transcription of reality alternates with scenes that are laughably off the mark. A young researcher seems to hand his resignation directly to the chief whip; the planting of a smear against a rival in the papers is done so ham-fistedly that any decent journalist would realise that the better story was the identity of the leaker.

The politics also seem confused. There's a reason for this: *Party Animals* started off as another New Labour satire in the style of *The Project* and *The Thick of It*, until nervous BBC2 chiefs realised that Blairism might be over by the time it reached the screen. As a result, the screen-time is now shared between the government and New Tories. There are lots of lines about "wind-powered toffs" and "Old Etonians", but this never feels more than a bit of last-minute topical spin in a series that feels it should have gone out during the pomp of Mandelson and Campbell.

Finally, and fatally for a political drama, the show soon starts seeming nervous about non-political viewers switching off. The climax of episode one is an emotional cliff-hanger which could have featured in any drama about doctors, lawyers or cops, and has. In most ways, *Party Animals* feels that it has come to the party too late.

'Remote Controller'

DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link, BBC2

Anne Robinson: In folklore, which warrior queen, who fought against the Romans, is sometimes said to be buried under a platform in King's Cross Station?

Contestant: Joan of Arc.

Who's On Top? phone-in quiz, Radio Clyde

Presenter: Cambridge, Atkins and Cabbage Soup are all types of what?

Contestant: Universities?

Bullseye, FTN

Jim Bowen: Who was that person with blonde hair, on the film clip of Summer Holiday, dancing with Una Stubbs?

Contestant: Sorry Jim, no idea.

Bowen: That's all right. It Ain't Half Hot Mum, Melvyn...

Contestant *(excited)*: Melvyn Bragg!

MEDIA NEWS

THE BBC's estimate for the cost of the proposed move to Manchester, codename "Project North", was – before the announcement of the below-inflation licence fee settlement – £600m. Now that the money is no longer going to be available, it has miraculously been reduced to £200m.

According to the Beeb's propaganda rag, *Ariel*, "the move to Salford has already been given the go-ahead" and 1,500 staff "will have to decide whether to move north, move on or take the redundancy option".

A move to Manchester simply will not happen on this scale at that price. But if 1,500 staff believe that it might and take "the redundancy option", then it is good news for the suits in the Value For Money project.

***NEWSNIGHT* reporters are refusing to co-operate with BBC plans to make at least two, possibly three, of their correspondents redundant. They have refused to submit new CVs or to attend boards designed to weed out the weak.**

Editor Peter Barron, who authorised the expansion of *Newsnight*'s pool of correspondents in the first place, reassured both Jeremy Paxman and Kirsty Wark that their careers had been "ring-fenced", before breaking the bad news to the rest of the threatened team.

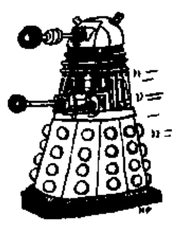
This caused much dismay. Memories of Wark's holiday with Scottish First Minister Jack McConnell, and her role in the Holyrood parliament building scandal and the subsequent unease among BBC governors about "impartiality", are still fresh.

Some say it should be the highly paid but damaged Wark who gets the chop, saving enough money to pay for at least three other correspondents.

Meanwhile during one recent meeting, the head of BBC radio current affairs told Mark Thompson that any more cuts in this department would mean an end to the quality of output – producers are just under too much pressure to meet very high expectations.

Amazingly, Thompson agreed, but the cuts will continue.

BIRTSPEAK 2.0



"I'll suggest that these challenges call for some new thinking about how we produce content and how we create value. That we should look hard at how multi-platform, 360 content creation and distribution can exploit the underlying value in content both more widely across platforms and more systematically over time – and at how it can drive new revenue streams. I'll suggest that technology is pulling down the barriers to entry for British content, British ideas and British formats in markets around the world." – *Mark Thompson, director-general of BBC, in speech to Media Summit 2007: The Future of Creative Content conference*

THE BBC has suddenly abandoned plans to produce a "docu-drama" about the fatal shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes in the wake of the 7/7 bombing, giving rise to accusations of government interference from the Menezes family.

BBC Publicity had claimed that the production team had discovered "difficult or dark" new evidence and they announced that the drama would be "the most important television commission of the year". But then the project was dropped because, said the BBC, the event had been thoroughly dealt with already by its news and current affairs output.

So what of this "difficult or dark" new evidence? The word at White City is that there actually isn't any and the programme would be far too expensive to make for the size of the audience it might attract. Those Value for Money cuts are really beginning to bite.

THE BBC is currently writing to its suppliers, encouraging them to "[avoid] common problems that hold up payment" by joining the OB10 electronic invoicing network. The new system, they say, should improve the BBC's sluggish paying process and reduce the number of overdue payments. Marvellous!

Just one small problem – joining OB10 costs £750 a year, plus 67p per invoice for small companies using the system fewer than 20 times a month. One prop hire company that received the letter described the Beeb's attempt to get suppliers to pay for being paid on time as "barefaced cheek".

ITV's *This Morning* team had a fascinating item scheduled for the programme on 23 January: an interview with women's refuge founder Jasvinder Sanghera about forced marriages and so-called "honour" crimes in the Asian community.

Sanghera travelled down from her home in Derby and was waiting in the green room of the programme's London Studios when she was told that she was being dropped from the programme in favour of a better interviewee: Jade Goody, who wanted to tell the world once again that she was not racist.

AND so to Antarctica, where Princess Anne has been giving Britons a dressing-down for their lack of green credentials. "We've got to tidy up our act because we are filthy," she told ITV News.

She might want to save it for her daughter, Zara Phillips, who is currently fronting an ad campaign for Land Rover. Land Rover's Range Rover 4.4 V8 manages a cool 12.7 miles per gallon as an urban hop-n-stop.

The *'Private Eye at 45'* cartoon exhibition at the Cartoon Museum, 35 Little Russell Street, continues until 11 February. Don't miss it.

Laurence Hey from London SW15 wins a year's sub for his bubble competition entry.

HOW TO WIN AT BIG BROTHER

Try To Keep Things In Proportion

"CELEB BIG BRUV: WORLD IN CRISIS" – *Sun headline*

"Prisons full. NHS in crisis. More soldiers dying. Inflation and bank rates up. So what was obsessing our political leaders yesterday? The *Big Brother* 'racism' row." – *Front page of Daily Mail on day the paper carried four articles and two editorials on the programme and an invitation to view the "latest pictures" and "all the latest news as it happens" on their website*

"BB Bullies? It's best to ignore them" – *Headline on Sunday Mirror editorial on day the paper featured the story on pages 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 23, 24-25 and 33*

"Incredible as it may seem, last night's vote was the most important in Britain since the last General Election." – *Sun editorial*

Don't Be Two-Faced

"This group is the most reasonable to have been gathered in the *Big Brother* house for years. The introduction of Jade Goody was a masterstroke." –*Telegraph, 13 January*

"*Big Brother* is crass, manipulative, common, lairy, gladiatorial and, for many people, repellent." – *Telegraph, 18 January*

"JADE GOODY EXCLUSIVE: follow my diet and exercise plan and you can shed two stone like me." – *The Mirror introduces a two-day feature series, 3 Jan*

"A BIGOT AND A FAKE" – *Mirror front-page headline over picture of a sobbing Goody, 20 Jan*

"Miss Goody personifies the new working-class hero… Being outspoken and blatantly unapologetic about her general daftness is, of course, what endeared Jade to us all." – *Sue Carroll, Mirror, 10 January*

"How much longer can Jade Goody prostrate herself in front of the nation begging to be forgiven for being a racist bully? ... There's practically nothing the public won't forgive when presented with saccharine-coated excuses, is there? Just one problem, we're not completely daft... I carry no torch for Jade and never will." – *Sue Carroll, Mirror, 24 January*

"*Big Brother* is to be credited with promoting racial and ethnic understanding. Trevor Phillips, the chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, will tonight claim that reality television shows such as *Big Brother* enable viewers to get to know people of widely diverse ethnic backgrounds in a way they would never do in real life." – *Guardian, June 28 2005*

"Trevor Phillips, chair of the Commission for Equality and Human Rights, said: 'What we are seeing is a noxious brew of old-fashioned class conflict, straightforward bullying, ignorance and quite vicious racial bigotry. It is outrageous, and it is unpleasant.' He added the show had 'laid bare the dark heart of private prejudice'." – *BBC news January 19 2007*

"When *Big Brother* or *I'm a Celebrity* reach their climax, there really is a sense that they become a national talking point – and I think that's a good thing. I've actually been quite keen on *Big Brother* – I've even been known to vote in the past. It's perfectly legitimate to describe that within the broader remit of public service broadcasting." – *Tessa Jowell, GMTV, 30 May 2004.*

"I think this is racism being presented as entertainment, and I think it is disgusting." – *Tessa Jowell, Oxford Media Convention, 18 January 2007.*

Stick To Your Moral Code

"I had to steel myself to watch it. The thing about sponsorship is that it's not based on the TV you like, but what the media buyers recommend. I did have a couple of letters of complaint, but I'm not worried.'" – *Carphone Warehouse CEO Charles Dunstone on his company's sponsorship of Big Brother in 2004, the year police were called to the Big Brother house after a fight between two contestants which featured the threat "it's fucking about being black. I'm going to fucking kill you".*

"Our concern has rapidly mounted about the broadcast behaviour of individuals within the *Big Brother* house. We are totally against all forms of racism and bullying and indeed this behaviour is entirely at odds with the brand values of the Carphone Warehouse. As a result we feel that as long as this continues we are unable to associate our brand with the programme." – *Charles Dunstone in 2007.*

"William Hill have written Jade Goody out of the *Big Brother* script and should she win Hills will be paying out on the contestant who comes second. 'As far as we are concerned Jade does not deserve to win and we will not be accepting any bets on her. If she wins we will be paying out on the contestant who comes second,' said Hills spokesman Rupert Adams. Hills now offer 12/1 that the unhappy pair come to blows." – *Bookmaker William Hills has some difficulty locating the moral high ground*

"We have asked our advertising agency to move our ads away from the slots around the programme. We don't want to be associated with the show. It may not be the best commercial decision but we think it's far more valuable to make a moral stand regardless of the financial implications." – *Alexander Cowenwright of Moneysupermarket.com, a firm which offers help with loans and remortgages, "bad credit no problem!"*

Don't Be A Snob

"More distasteful entertainment would be hard to devise. *Big Brother* strips people of their freedom and privacy for weeks at a time. It does so to make drama from the individual failings and unhealthy relationships that inevitably emerge under its unremitting scrutiny…" – *Leader column in the Guardian, which devoted more column inches to the last series of Celebrity Big Brother than any other newspaper in the UK*

"Until a few days ago I was in the happy position of never having heard of and, even better, never having seen something called 'Jade Goody'." – *Simon Heffer, Telegraph, which ran 19 articles about Goody during 2006*

Know The Rules

"Channel 4 News has learned that the public wasn't given the whole picture last night, when producers decided to leave out an incident where Jade Goody called her housemate Shilpa 'Poppadom'. But they have decided to air that exchange tonight." – *Channel 4 News, apparently unaware that every single highlights show for the past 12 series has been broadcast 24 hours behind events*

"I'm not going to tell people how to vote. It's for people to decide for themselves how to vote, but I think a vote for Britain is a vote for tolerance." – *Gordon Brown, apparently thinking he is commenting on the Eurovision Song Contest*

"Vote for Shilpa to save Britain's reputation" – *Headline in the Daily Mail. Viewers were voting for the housemate they would most like to evict*

Get People's Names Right

"Last night Jade admitted housemate Shipla Shetty had been the victim of racism and bullying. Jade, in an emotional interview, said her remarks to Bollywood star Shipla were racist. And she has donated her £50,000 show fee and £50,000 for the interview to charities to be chosen by Shipla and herself." – *Jane Clinton misspells Shilpa Shetty's name throughout her piece for the Sunday Express*

Bullying Is Unacceptable

"When she first burst onto our collective consciousness in the groundbreaking *Big Brother* series in 2002 she was a fat, stupid, foulmouthed slob quickly branded by the red-top newspapers 'The Pig' … Looking back, we overlooked the fact that Jade was clearly intellectually and emotionally subnormal. She is a vicious guttersnipe, her mind and prejudices as filthy as her language." – *Amanda Platell, Daily Mail*

"RACIST JADE IS A NASTY FAKER… this ugly human being (and I don't mean physically)… The gruesome Goody girl… This horrible, hate-filled woman… a disgusting, domineering bitch" – *Kevin O'Sullivan, Sunday Mirror*

"She has left the house with her true personality laid bare: A vile, pig ignorant, racist bully consumed by envy of a woman of superior intelligence, beauty and class. Hopefully Jade will now slither back under the rock from where she crawled." – *Sun editorial*

Number crunchings

63% ■ vote for Shilpa Shetty to win Celebrity Big Brother in "triumph over racism"

77% ■ vote for Take That's Mark Owen to win Celebrity Big Brother in 2002

SIGNAL FAILURES

Under the weather

NETWORK RAIL's explanation last week that "extreme weather" inevitably plunges Britain's railways into turmoil would have struck citizens of Canada, Russia and most other countries as quaint.

Britain has one of the most temperate climates of any country, but already this year our railways have been disrupted by wind, snow and rain. Over the past 12 months, warm summer weather, autumn leaves and even pollen have affected trains.

The dusting of snow that fell on Tuesday night last week caught NR by surprise, but then who would expect snow in January? Metronet, the private consortium which looks after most of London Underground's tracks (allegedly), was also caught with its pants down. It blamed LU for not warning it the weather would be as bad as it turned out to be; presumably there's no provision in Metronet's PPP (public private partnership) contract for getting the weather forecast from the internet, radio or television.

Even when NR is prepared for snow, there's still no guarantee the trains will run properly. On Thursday morning last week the snowfall was lighter than forecast, but many south-east commuters were disrupted for a second morning.

Wrong kind of minister

HOW gullible does transport secretary Douglas Alexander think people are? Explaining the rail network's deficiencies on the *Today* programme, he said: "We inherited a situation where we had the botched privatisation of the railways, so we needed to get stability in the rail industry."

Perhaps he was thinking of Scotland; he's Scottish, has a Scottish seat and is Scottish secretary. Scotland's rail franchise hasn't had boundaries changed by officials desperate to justify their jobs. First ScotRail's subsidy increases each year, and overcrowding hasn't been exacerbated by dumping carriages in sidings.

But Alexander is transport secretary for England; he clearly wants Sassenachs to believe rail privatisation has been unbotched and their railways are now stable.

The main causes of instability when Labour took office were short-term train franchises and Railtrack plc. For four years Labour said buying back Failtrack was too costly and left it presiding over death and destruction; by the time Labour created Network Rail, the infrastructure was so neglected billions of pounds were needed for repairs. NR as it now stands is far from stable: its growing debt (now £20bn) is unsustainable, and its failure to expand rail capacity will cause problems as demand for travel continues to grow.

Labour has preserved the Tories' botch of rail franchising. New franchises are so unstable the contest won by GNER in 2005, for a 10-year franchise, is already being repeated (*Eye* 1175). That franchise simply covered an established group of services; changing franchise boundaries risks other forms of disruption, as First Great Western (which incorporated Wessex Trains in April) has shown with its pisspoor performance and timetable changes.

Alexander still hasn't learned the value of stability. This year services across most of England face upheaval because he and his mandarins take a sadistic delight in messing passengers around. Central Trains will be disbanded. Train and station leases and staff will be transferred, at huge administrative cost, to other franchises, some of which don't yet exist. The transport department is also meddling with cross-country timetables, despite the public clamour for stability (*Eye* 1172).

After so much pain for passengers, trains will still be provided under short contracts – misaligned to the industry's long investment timescales – by the same old bunch of companies whose priority is maximising annual returns to shareholders.

RAIL minister Tom Harris (another Scot) must also think the English are stupid. After his chief rail official, Mike Mitchell, said it was acceptable for commuters with £5,000 season tickets to stand, Harris explained that overcrowding problems were only temporary. "I would much rather ... we have the capacity for every passenger to get a seat, but that would not be realistic in the short-term," he said. "Until we get the new rolling stock on the lines, people affected by this will have to be patient."

The only parts of England where his comments might hold water are Kent and north London. New premium-fare commuter trains will begin in 2009 on the Chunnel rail link; they're more about getting people to the Olympics and avoiding embarrassingly low usage of the new link than improving life for all Kent commuters, whose fares are rising three percent above inflation annually. North London will get new trains, but only because local routes are moving over to Transport for London.

For the rest of England, where Strathclyde MPs Alexander and Harris remain in charge, no new commuter trains are on the way. In the north, passengers will suffer bus-type trains for years to come because the government even vetoed cheap new Chinese trains. Harris is doing nothing to cut future overcrowding, and his comments are doubly misleading because his department is worsening present overcrowding. Hundreds of usable carriages have been dumped and 120 more are going from the new South West Trains franchise, which starts next Monday.

'Dr B. Ching'

Down on the Farm

NEXT month is the sixth anniversary of the start of the foot and mouth disaster – the limit for anyone still wishing to seek legal redress from the government for any of its countless acts of injustice at that time. Hence lawyers for one such group of victims lodged papers two weeks ago with the High Court to sue Defra for £40m, the biggest single compensation claim in its history.

The delight of this case is that Defra is being hoist with a petard of its own devising. As the old Maff (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) became plunged in a crisis beyond its comprehension, officials looked around for a scapegoat. That role was allotted to a Northumberland pig farmer named Bobbie Waugh, whose "dirty" Burnside Farm the Maffia quickly blamed as the source of the epidemic. To this day no one has the faintest idea where the virus actually originated, but the Maffia story centred on pigswill and the fact that Waugh had been feeding his 562 pigs on swill gathered from various establishments round Newcastle, including Chinese restaurants.

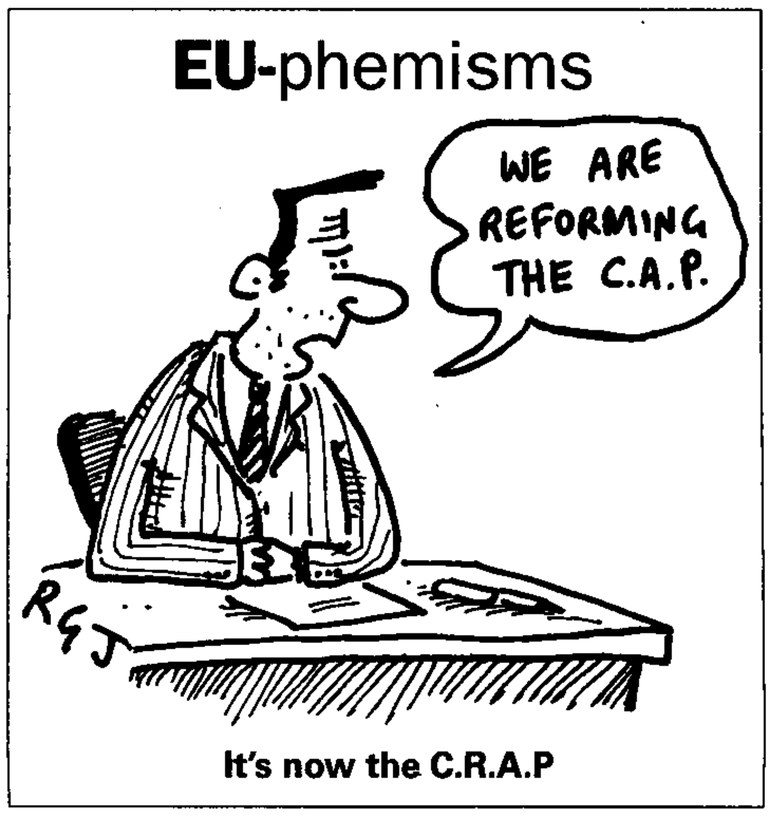
Feeding scraps to pigs is as old as farming, but the Maffia portrayed it as the most disgusting and dangerous practice known to man. And as part of its "war" against swill, it promptly closed down all the 62 businesses across the land which still derived their income from turning 1.7 million tons a year of scraps into pig food. Several hundred people were left without a living or a penny in compensation. It is they – led by a remarkable woman, Lynn Davies – who after years of fighting to have their case heard have now brought an action against the government.

One reason they hadn't sued till now is that, having won support from a dozen MPs, including Boris "Beano" Johnson, they were advised that their best hope was to appeal to the Ombudsman. But still nothing has emerged, despite being promised a year ago that a ruling could be expected "in two or three weeks". It hardly inspired confidence when Christine Corrigan, the official in charge of the case, admitted to being "a close personal friend" of a senior Defra official involved in the consultation on banning pigswill.

The nub of the legal action is that the Maffia acted with gross negligence in not closing down Waugh's farm much earlier, when, as the businesses allege, the presence of FMD should have been spotted by a Maffia vet, Jim Dring. Had this happened, the swill feeders claim, the epidemic might never have arisen, swill would not have been vilified as the spawn of the devil and their industry might still be flourishing.

They are ably represented and have powerful evidence to produce. They even hope to call into the witness box Sir Brian Bender, Maff's hapless permanent secretary at the time. But the joy of the case is that, even if Waugh's farm was not the source of the epidemic, Defra cannot wriggle out of the fact that it has always maintained that it was. On that basis, it would be only appropriate if a group of men and women so unjustly maligned and deprived of their livelihoods were finally to get the justice they deserve.

'Mucksprеader'



It's now the C.R.A.P

HIGH PRINCIPALS

HONORARY doctorates – if not actual honours – are doing much to cheer the public spirited at Richmond, "the American International University in London". This beacon of learning has dished out 81 honorary degrees since 1992, of which eight went to patrons of the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT), their wives, and chiefs of patron organisations.

The honorary doctorates have gone to Lord Harris of Peckham and Dame Pauline Harris, Lord Quirk (a Trustee of patron organisation the Wolfson Foundation), Sir Stanley Kalms (a patron in his own right as boss of Academy sponsors Dixons), Sir John Bond (chair of patron HSBC holdings), Sir Colin Southgate (former chair of patron EMI Music), Dr John Morgridge (chair of patron Cisco Systesms) and former education minister Lord Baker of Dorking (yet another patron of SSAT). The organisation has only 21 patrons, so such a concentration of honorary doctors from one university is extraordinary.

Sir Cyril Taylor, the government advisor who has championed City Academies and is chairman of SSAT, was also made an honorary Doctor of Economics by Richmond in 1997.

Why such enthusiasm for SSAT and its supporters at Richmond? Sir Cyril is also chancellor of Richmond University. Of course, the great man does not himself award the honorary degrees, although he does sit on the nominating sub-committee and was its chairman until 2004. But the university's president Norman Smith explains that as well as rewarding those who have helped the university, they feel it is "appropriate to honour those who have selflessly helped to advance other worthy causes". And what more worthy cause could there be than selling out schools to big business?

BOROUGH COUNCIL APPOINTS ANTI-SOCIAL BOSS

Radcliffe on Trent Parish Council Newsletter

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

QUICHE LORRAINE

ALL GOOD things come to an end – unless you happen to be Lorraine Langham, the PR consultant whose company Renaissance was paid £1m for spin-doctoring services between 2000 and 2005 by Tower Hamlets, Britain's second most-deprived borough (*Eye*s passim).

In 2005 the council decided to put the running of its communications department out to tender. To no one's great surprise the 15-month contract was won by Verve, another company set up by Langham and her business partner Tony O'Regan – who himself happens to be a former head of Tower Hamlets PR department (*Eye* 1141).

Langham became temporary head of "strategic communications" with a remit to "restructure" the comms department. One of the first priorities was to "restructure" press officer Eileen Short (sister of MP Clare) out of her job because she campaigned in her spare time against the council's policy of flogging off its housing stock (*Eye* 1146).

Between August 2005 and June 2006, the easy-to-work-with Langham went through three "heads of communications" and another three "heads of press". In the middle of last year, she suggested the council should use head-hunters Gatenby Sanderson (GS) to hire a permanent press supremo on £80,000 a year. Despite trousering £40,000 for the job, GS failed to find anyone suitable.

Langham's contract was due to end in late October 2006, but it was renewed for another three months so she could conduct an audit – of the communications department! Now she has won another extension, until April, because, er, the head of communications job remains unfilled.

Getting a full-time communications supremo on £80,000 would save the council a tidy sum, because in 2005-6 Verve were paid nearly that much every month, submitting invoices totalling £933,000.

Still, the popular Ms Langham is clearly worth every penny. Vital PR initiatives have included a series of two-day courses to coach councillors to perform on TV and radio, at a cost of £6,200 a session. Great value, even if Tower Hamlets councillors are not actually crowding our TV screens. The council shelled out £25,000 on a DVD history of the borough – presented by her chum, former Tower Hamlets chief executive Christine Gilbert (now head of Ofsted) – which was shown for a few months in the council's "Ideas Stores" (which used to be known as "libraries"). A pointless anti-crime campaign called "Cleaner, Safer, Greener" cost taxpayers £17,000 for posters, T-shirts and banners. Stickers for town hall suggestion boxes were charged at £7 a go. And so on.

Opposition Tories have been making a fuss about how Verve came to be awarded its contract in 2005, and the subject is on the agenda for the council's scrutiny committee in March. No doubt any controversy will be smoothly spun away.

● **ALL THIS spending on bullshit, of course, has to be paid for somehow. Tower Hamlets' budget for the next year, reports Shelter's *Roof* magazine, proposes to introduce charges for homecare for vulnerable elderly people and cut "moderate need" homecare services entirely. The council also proposes to axe the service that investigates complaints of unfairness in housing repairs in the private rented sector. Meanwhile £1.42m is to be set aside to pay for a new "office accommodation strategy" – i.e. comfier chairs and swisher desks for overstretched council staff.**

TORIES IN SOCCER ORGY

THE last *Eye* told how Conservatives in Christchurch, Dorset, had accepted a donation from a developer months after the Tory-controlled borough council had granted planning permission for a controversial hotel development.

But then the council has quite a record of getting in a pickle over hotel developments. After the historic Avonmouth Hotel in Mudeford was taken over by a consortium whose backers included controversial football agent Dennis Roach (whose former clients include Glenn Hoddle, Mark Hughes and Mark Hateley), who lives nearby, they put in plans for a refurbishment scheme which would be funded by building apartments in the harbourside grounds. After strong opposition from locals a slightly watered-down scheme was passed. After the decision there were bizarre scenes in the hallway of the council offices as an "emotional" Roach kissed and cuddled Tory councillors who had voted for the scheme. This led one resident to complain to our old friends the Standards Board for England. The councillors were cleared of any bias after the investigating officer said they would have appeared rude if they had rebuffed Mr Roach's "emotional and overly enthusiastic" response – only understandable, after all, after gaining consent for such a lucrative scheme.

PARKING MAD

AS the *Eye* went to press Lib-Dem controlled Richmond council was about to vote in favour of going ahead with its headline-grabbing but environmentally unsound, unfair and probably unlawful plan to drastically raise parking permit charges for drivers of so-called "gas guzzling" vehicles.

Council leader Serge Lourie claimed that, after a "consultation", a "clear majority" of residents were in favour. The council did not carry out face-to-face interviews for its survey, preferring the cheaper "self-completion postal method" of sending out forms to a sample of 3,481 homes and 1,251 businesses. Fewer than half responded. The "self completion" method, of course, means that only those with the strongest opinions are likely to reply. The fact that 83 percent of questionnaires were sent to homes outside controlled parking zones (CPZs) – unaffected by the scheme and therefore happier for others to pay more – meant that the "consultation" was heavily biased in favour

of the "Yes" result the council wanted.

Opponents of the scheme, which they believe would actually do almost nothing to reduce CO_2 emissions in the borough (*see Eye* 1174), are still waiting for the council to reveal the legal advice which Cllr Lourie says justifies flouting the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act which specifies that parking schemes may only be used for traffic management rather than revenue-raising purposes. The council used taxpayers' money to seek "counsel's opinion" but will not say what it is. Residents are trying to figure out why, if the legal opinion supports the proposal, it must be kept secret. If it does not, and the council goes ahead anyway, is that not reckless and unlawful?

UIST A MINUTE

NOT everyone in the Western Isles of Scotland is celebrating the £4.5m "community" purchase of the 93,000 acre South Uist Estate, led by local businessman Angus MacMillan. Environmentalists are increasingly concerned about Western Isles council's ability to protect this unique landscape, which comprises 25 percent of the total council area.

Concern centres on salmon farms in South Uist owned and operated by MacMillan's West Minch Salmon Ltd company and another farm in the care of Iain Steele of South Side Salmon Ltd. These three farms, in a stunning landscape at Glendale in the south of the island, have lain derelict and in breach of their planning approvals for more than a year.

Indeed, one of the West Minch Salmon sites, in Loch Marulaig, appears to have been operating illegally for nine years. Planning permission was granted in June 1995 on condition that permission "shall expire of 31st July 1998 whereafter the cages shall be removed from the loch unless a further planning permission for their retention has been granted beforehand". According to WIC, "no further planning approval has been applied for [or granted]".

Angus MacMillan's Lochs Marulaig and Kearsinish sites have lain empty of fish for more than 12 months, whilst Iain Steele's Loch Moreef site has been devoid of fish for two years. During a visit to Marulaig and Kearsinish in November an environmental group found both sites to be little other than rubbish dumps; rusty barrels, sunken boats, broken bits of cages and weed-festooned duckboards littered the moor.

Has the council made any attempt to enforce its planning conditions and order the fish farmers to clean up and clear out? Not so far. Meanwhile, Mr MacMillan, himself a former employee of Western Isles Council, has been appointed chairman of Stòras Uibhist, the community company that now owns and runs the South Uist estates.

● **QUOTE of the week, from the *Jersey Evening Post*, which devoted a leading article to the refusal of prominent local water diviner George Langlois to accept conclusions from a definitive British Geological Survey investigation that found no evidence at all of limitless fresh water flowing deep underground to the island from France (*Eye* 1172), as he had claimed. "Perhaps, Mr Langlois," concluded the *JEP*, "it is time to move on. We tried, we failed, we've been ridiculed in *Private Eye*. The dream is over."**

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON — KNIFE & PACKER

GETTING A PUNCH-BAG INSTALLED AT HOME HAS BEEN AN INSPIRED STRESS-BUSTER...
TURN OFF THE HANDS FREE, DISCONNECT THE WIRELESS INTERNET, DISENGAGE THE MP3 PLAYER AND VENT YOUR FURY!
AND I MUST SAY, QUIN, IT WAS A GENIUS IDEA TO HAVE IT PRINTED WITH AN IMAGE OF AN ICELANDIC WHALING VESSEL...
MARITIME MURDERERS!!!

NOOKS and CORNERS

WAS it W.C. Fields who said, "Anyone who hates children and animals can't be all bad"? I mention this as the following article is bound to cause offence.

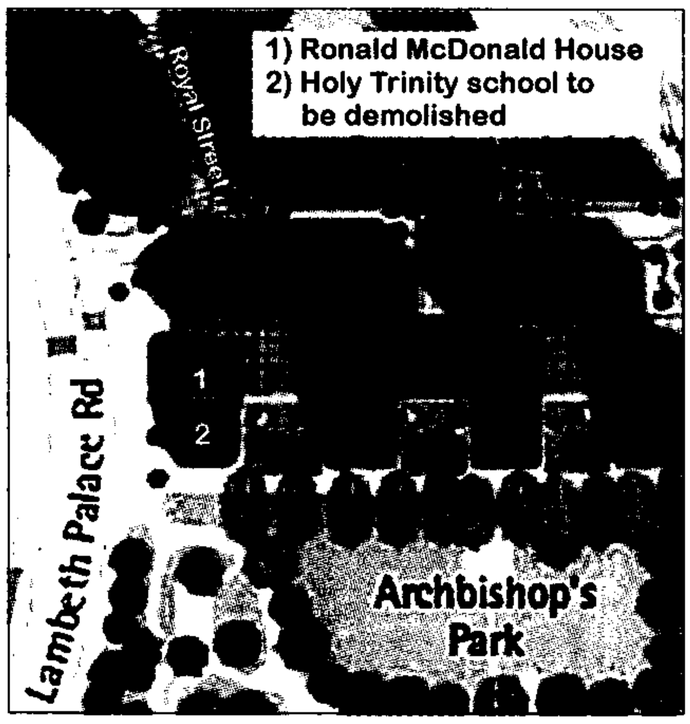
There are parts of cities where the planning authorities feel that anything goes. One of these is north Lambeth, where residents are but a nuisance and big schemes have overwhelmed the modest terraces and other buildings that once made it interesting. First, the war-damaged end of St Thomas's Hospital was rebuilt with some of the most banal 1960s buildings in Britain – those clinical white tile-clad blocks by Yorke Rosenberg and Mardall that impudently face the Houses of Parliament across the Thames. Then, in the 1970s, the GLC built a grey concrete pentagonal extension on a new roundabout behind County Hall. This horrible structure has just been demolished – an opportunity, you might think, to re-create the old street pattern and make a space in front of the handsome 1828 Lying In Hospital. But no: on the cards is an even bigger and more offensive building – the 14-storey Westminster Bridge Park Plaza, a vulgar, glass-clad cylindrical block of some 900 "luxury suites" designed by BUJ Architects.

But I am concerned with what is to be called Founder's Place, a development behind St Thomas's Hospital which is proposed to straddle Royal Street and overlook Archbishop's Park, formerly the gardens of Lambeth Palace. On the north side at present are two 1950s blocks named Canterbury and Stangate, built to house nurses and others displaced when Lambeth Palace Road was re-aligned to accommodate St Thomas's new buildings. On the other side of the street is the former Holy Trinity School, now the Holy Trinity Urban Centre, a gabled brick Gothic building originally of 1852. This school, a decent and charming structure, stands within the Lambeth Palace Conservation area yet it is to be demolished, along with all the other buildings in and near Royal Street, to make way for a massive development of eight new buildings promoted by the Guy's and St Thomas' Charity and designed, I am sorry to record, by Terry Farrell and Partners. To the north, there are to be two private residential towers – one of 20 storeys, one of 15 – as well as blocks of accommodation for nurses and others. To the south, overlooking the park, are to be private residential blocks as well as "Ronald McDonald House" for the parents of sick children. Despite the cringe-making name, this is, of course, an admirable proposal and it will be run by the Evelina Children's Hospital. But that is not the point.

This overweening scheme was put in for planning permission last year. Opposition came from the MP for Lambeth, Kate Hoey, and from local groups, who objected to the effect the scale of the development would have on Archbishop's Park and the possible damage to its trees, while the Canterbury and Stangate Tenants' Association pointed out that the new accommodation was inferior and there was a loss of open space.

Last June the planning committee turned the scheme down, arguing that it was "an oppressive and overbearing development… failing to provide an acceptable level of amenity for prospective residential occupiers", and that the buildings south of Royal Street would "harm the setting of the Park thereby failing to preserve the character and appearance of Lambeth Palace conservation area". Quite.

The Guy's and St Thomas' Charity is appealing against the decision. Being a charity and believing that its priorities for health care must override all other considerations, the hospital is not used to being thwarted. Next time round it is determined to win. Interestingly, the Friends of Archbishop's Park have now changed their minds, ever since newer, non-local members used their postal votes. In England, of course, sentimentality about children (and animals) always defeats reason. And Kate Hoey is being subjected to moral blackmail, with parents of sick children effectively accusing her of being a child-hating monster for stopping the building of Ronald McDonald House. But the truth is that this hostel for parents could perfectly well be built without destroying Holy Trinity School and without such excessive development. If not on the largely empty land by the park, it could go on the underdeveloped Block 9, a gap in St Thomas's Hospital facing the river; or it could go in the old Lying In Hospital nearby, which is now for sale.

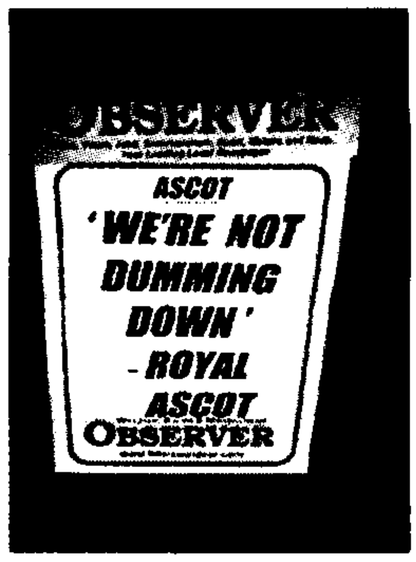


The fact is that the Guy's & St Thomas' Charity is being plain greedy, and a more modest scheme – keeping the school and respecting the park – could and should secure planning permission. But St Thomas's Hospital thinks it can do no wrong. Given the awfulness of those white-tiled blocks which disfigure the heart of London (and which ought to go), it certainly can.

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH



I-SPY

Windsor, Ascot & Maidenhead Observer placard

Submitted by Anon.

£10 paid for similar submissions.

(SAE required for return of photographs)

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

LIVING as we do in post-Utopian times, the collapse of a historic dream for a better world hardly registers as news. But spare a thought for the disintegrating dream of Dorothy Elmhirst, the American heiress who in the 1920s had a vision of a perfect rural community where music and the other arts would thrive alongside craftwork, agriculture and the general pursuit of well-being.

It was called Dartington, after the medieval hall with 800 acres of surrounding Devonshire countryside she bought to house the project. Over time it grew to include a boarding school, a college of arts, a celebrated music summer-school, and craft industries such as Dartington Glass. All co-existed in something close to harmony and drew in luminaries such as Stravinsky, Britten, Tagore, John Cage and Bernard Leach.

Then, Utopia being what it is, the enterprise began to splinter. The boarding school got scandalously radical and had to close. The glassworks were hived off. And now it has been announced that Dartington College of Arts is to disappear. Unable to survive financially, it will relocate either to Plymouth or to Falmouth, 90 miles away, and be subsumed into one of the existing university colleges there. But it won't be going without a fight.

Last weekend the nearby town of Totnes, national retirement home of Sixties peace campaigners and aromatherapists, erupted into unaccustomed scenes of protest – led, charmingly, by the Totnes Symphony Orchestra but with support from serious arts figures such as stage director Peter Brook and composer Gavin Bryars. Angry that Dartington's plans have been developed in secret, with no consultation, the protesters believe the financial crisis is merely an excuse for the controlling Dartington Hall Trust to rid itself of a burden and replace it with something more profitable – such as corporate conference facilities – in blatant disregard for the spirit of Elmhirst's legacy.

In reply, the Trustees (who include the Proms director Nicholas Kenyon) claim their secrecy was to avoid a "detrimental effect" on the current student body, and insist that Dorothy's vision will live on. But their insistence is buried in worryingly guarded language. They admit that the departure of the college will have a "detrimental impact" on the whole Dartington venture. And they accept that it will present "challenges" to the music summer-school that will require "adaptation". Whatever that means.

Clearly there is a real possibility that Dartington may turn into something very different from the idealistic community it was set up to be. Until it happens, those responsible will of course deny that such a thing could come to pass. But when it does, they will say it was inevitable: times have changed. Maybe we shouldn't let them change so easily.

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

Letters

Assisting enlargement

Sir,

I notice that, due to the enlargement of the EU, newly joined Romania has sent five extreme right-wing MEPs to the European Parliament in Strasbourg.

In order to reassure your readers that not all Romanians are nationalistic bigots, I wondered if you had in your files any pictures that show Romanian citizens getting involved with more liberal causes?

Yours sincerely,
GARETH PRATT,
London SE25.

In the dog house

... With reference to the cartoon "homework" (Eye 1176), I understand that satire and the making light of topical and controversial issues is the staple of this, mostly, fine publication. But I could not help but feel somewhat repulsed for the need to highlight the latest re-introduction of the Dangerous Dogs Act to the media spotlight, in such an insensitive manner.

The children fatally savaged by these animals, which are deemed in the public eye as pets, has no bearing on the humour Richter scale.

I'm sure those children's family and friends, myself and anyone who has had any "near misses" with a dog, will not appreciate your cartoonist's tactless effort to graft a cheap page filler.

MARK MOORLEY.

... For you to agree to the use of this cartoon in PE is unforgivable. Please cancel my subscription – this is not a joke either.

C. GRIMMER.

*... Cartoon on p6, issue 1176. Just... **no**.*

JOHN HALTON.

Brand awareness

Sir,

I expect Russell Brand knows that Bacchus is the God of wine (Pseuds Corner, Eye 1176). Maybe he was, in his ruminations about "a kid in a sweetshop", referring to surrendering to a spirit of reckless hedonistic excess. I don't suppose he thinks Bacchus is the God of sweets.

Whatever Brand's knowledge or otherwise of classical mythology, we can all agree that he is a world class expert on hedonistic excess, having devoted his adult life to its pursuit.

Yours,
LINDA MARTIN,
East Grinstead.

Lookalike

Jones

Linley

Sir,

I expect lots of people have sent you this Lord Linley/Tom Jones lookalike.

JULES LAGRANGE,
Montpelier, France.

Gavel Basher bashed

Sir,

I was glad to see that you had decided to cover the House of Lords debate on The Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006, but was disappointed as I read the superficial and ill-informed article penned by "Gavel Basher".

He writes: "If the Stormont Assembly was not currently crocked it would quite possibly throw out these regulations, almost unanimously."

The Assembly might well be "crocked", but it meets to debate current issues and legislation, and votes are taken. On 11 December 2006 the Assembly debated a motion, moved by the DUP, that the Government be called upon to withdraw the Regulations. The vote taken at the end of the debate was tied, 39 to 39, therefore the motion fell. So the assertion made by "Gavel Basher" is completely wrong.

It is worth noting that PUP representative, the late David Ervine, spoke and voted in favour of the retention of the Regulations. However, the vast majority of votes in favour of retention came from Sinn Fein, the SDLP, and Alliance Party. As a Protestant, it may be an uncomfortable fact for me that gay people have to rely on Sinn Fein to defend our human rights, but the votes cast speak for themselves.

"Gavel Basher" also suggests that Tory peers "accepted the gentle nudge of the Cameron leadership" in the way they voted. I am no apologist for the Conservative Party, and acknowledge that in the past more Labour politicians have advocated equal rights for gay people than Tory ones, but the Tory peers who voted against the DUP motion have a consistent record of voting and speaking in favour of equality, and it is cheap to suggest that they were nudged into voting the way they did.

Yours faithfully,
IAN WALSH,
Via email.

Lookalike

Hi de Hi staff

Beckham

Sir,

Has old Goldenballs Beckham been moonlighting as the Sports Instructor on a new series of "Hi de Hi" at Maplin's Holiday Camp?

DAVID KEMP,
Luton.

Sticky labels

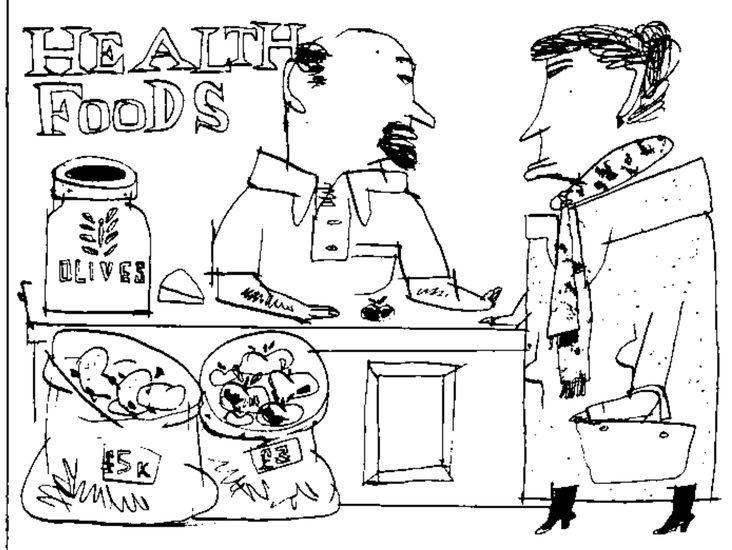
Sir,

"Muckspreader" was economical with the facts when he rubbished David Cameron's speech on the labelling of British food and the constraints of EU regulations (Eye 1176). Cameron said: "I know that this may raise issues with the European Union. But the role of a Government that cares about British farming is not to sit on its hands and say 'there's nothing we can do', but to test these rules and if necessary challenge and change them."

The question really is – if he can't get agreement on this, would he unilaterally change the rules and to hell with the consequences?

BRIAN PARTRIDGE,
Via email.

Scenes You Seldom See



"Our organic produce is the same price as everything else"

God save the queens

Sir,

May I pick a small bone (tee hee hee, etc etc) with your "Gay rights" cartoon (Eye 1176, p8)? As a Christian, I find it a bit unfair to describe the Christian position as "No to gays" – as any fule no, it is the sexual conduct of an individual that is called sinful in the Bible, not the individual's existence in my back yard (or, indeed, their attraction to members of the same sex – heck, even Jesus was tempted in the Gospels). Whilst my homosexual acquaintances know my position as regards their behaviour, we still manage to talk to each other without coming to fisticuffs. This is largely because I treat them with the same attitude of decency and respect as any other "sinner" – myself and my Christian friends included. Of course, one does come across the occasional moron wearing a "God Hates Fags" sandwich board, but most of them seem to be thousands of miles away in the US, thankfully...

Otherwise, keep up the good work,

All the best,
JAMIE ROBERTSON.
Glasgow.

Toilet trouble

Sir,

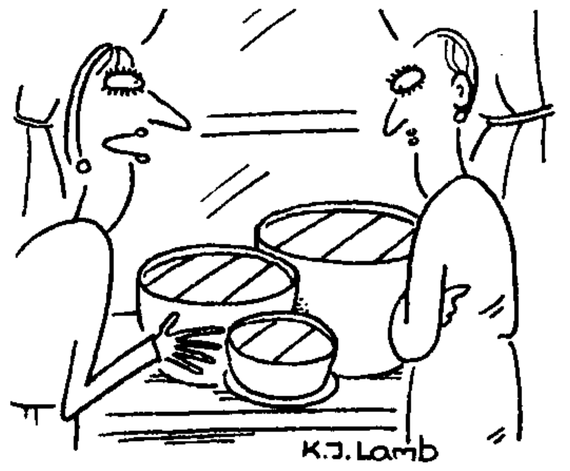
Unfortunately it's not such a "Funny Old World" for the 2.6 billion people living without adequate sanitation!

We don't mind toilet humour, at WaterAid we love nothing better than dressing up as toilets and turds to raise awareness and hopefully some funds too, but it's important to remember that 40% of the world's population suffer the daily indignity of living without toilets.

Lack of adequate sanitation is responsible for contaminated water in many developing countries, causing 5,000 children to die every day from water-related diseases.

So no problem with having a laugh – but respect to the World Toilet Organisation for addressing the unacceptable reality of billions of people with no acccess to any kind of toilet!

Best wishes,
STEPHEN TURNER,
WaterAid Policy Director.



"I've had so much more spare time since I decked over the houseplants"

Lookalike

Blair **Jenkins**

Sir,

Have you clocked the pictures of Roger Jenkins – Britain's richest banker – in the papers recently? He's completely bald but is otherwise a replica of Tony Blair, it's uncanny.

ALAN YENTOB,
London W12.

Plan of inaction

Sir,

While welcoming your publication's interest in the untimely demolition of Cumberlow Lodge (Eye 1176), I would like to take this opportunity to make some observations that may be helpful to your readers.

The article implies that the local authority which inherited William Stanley's home and secured the receipts on its sale to developers was Croydon Council. For the record, the site was sold to Fairview by our neighbours, Lambeth Council.

At the time of writing, Fairview have yet to submit a planning application and so Croydon Council, as the local planning authority, cannot be certain as to the developer's precise intentions. When we do receive an application it will have to be considered on the planning merits of the proposal, just like any other application.

While my council deplores the premature demolition of Mr Stanley's legacy, I am sure you will appreciate that the planning authority cannot refuse an application purely because we may disapprove of the behaviour of an applicant. Technically, Fairview have done nothing wrong. Clearly, when considering matters relevant to a planning application, we must also be mindful that any reasons for refusal are likely to be tested on appeal.

Yours faithfully,
CLLR CHRIS WRIGHT,
Croydon Council.

Photo opportunity

Sir,

With all the racial unpleasantness recently exhibited on Celebrity Big Brother, it would be nice if you could find a picture showing a more harmonious relationship between a white person and someone of Asian origin.

Thank you.

J. KNIGHTS,
Via email.

SOLUTIONS

"Lockwood's Mushy Pea Fritters: the frozen versatile meal solution" – *food*

"The Woodhorn Group: Earth Cycle Soil Solutions" – *compost*

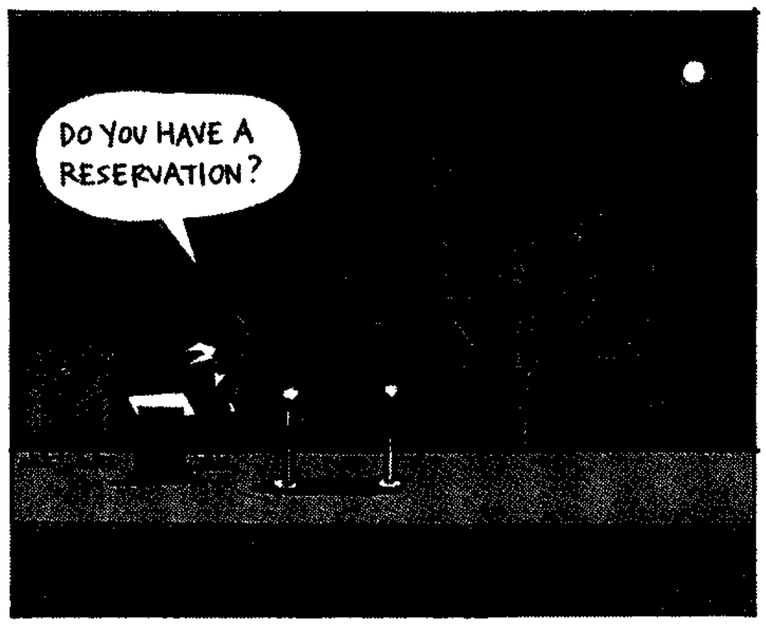
"Energyst generator hire solutions" – *generator hire*

"BAE Systems Submarine Solutions" – *Vickers Shipyard, Barrow-in-Furness*

"BAE Systems Military Air Solutions" – *Warton Aerodrome, Preston*

"70 Chancery Lane: Work Solutions, Living Solutions and Retail Solutions" – offices, flats and shops

All submitted by readers



Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"I live in my own world. I don't make any apologies for that. I'm sorry if it offends anyone."

LEO SAYER, Channel 4
("michaelhrae")

"Riise's had four chances. I wouldn't say two of them were chances, mind."

ANDY GRAY, Sky
(Oliver Ohanlon)

Q: *Favourite item of clothing?*
A: *My watch. I got it for my birthday and I haven't had it off since.*

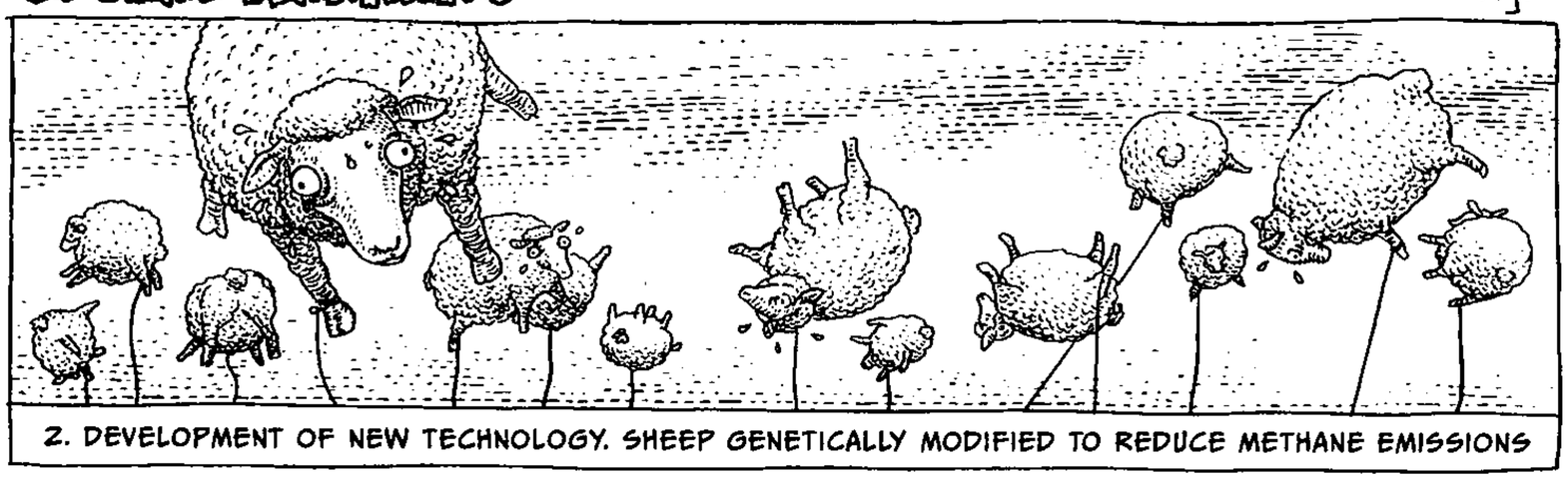
SHAUN MURPHY
(Archie McArthur)

"Chris Gayle has still got himself up his sleeve..."

SHAUN UDAL, Sky Sports
(Bernard Hughes)

"He [Ding] was in tears. Ronnie O'Sullivan put his arm around him and cajoled him."

Presenter, TalkSport
(Stephen Davenport)


GLOBAL WARMING THE PLUS SIDE
AJP
2. DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TECHNOLOGY. SHEEP GENETICALLY MODIFIED TO REDUCE METHANE EMISSIONS

Pedants' Paradise

Sir,

I couldn't help but notice a glaring error from your lookalike correspondent. The delightful Jackiey of Jade Goody fame does not look like an Orc, she looks like an Urak Hai. I must add that Orcs and Urak Hais all over middle England have been deeply offended by being associated with a cave troll like Jackiey.

OAK BAILEY (aged 12).

... Remote Controller (Eye 1176) describes one of the housemates in the current Celebrity Big Brother as "a boybander who has just managed to tell the Sun that he was gay". In fact, this individual, Ian "H", is/was not a "boybander" – his former band "Steps" comprised boys and girls.

DR ALEX MAY.

... Shurely shome mishtake? The old sea-dog standing next to Her Maj (Eye 1176) is attired in the uniform of the Merchant, not Royal Navy. The officer is Commodore Ron Warwick, at the Naming Ceremony of Cunard's Queen Mary 2, of which he was the first Master.

I know, I should get out more.

KEITH HIGH.

... Mike Barfield is my absolutely favourite Eye cartoonist, so I didn't want my nit-picking to spoil his fun too close to the publishing of "Avian End-of-Year Letters" (Eye 1174). A robin was shown writing up his year's exploits to send to friends and family over the caption "round robin".

The end-of-year letters which we send and receive are called "circular letter"' or suchlike, but they are not "round robins". A round robin in the late 18th and early 19th century was a letter of appeal or protest written usually by soldiers or sailors and presented to their commanding officers.

In those days when "ring leaders" were often brutally punished as an example, the signatories to such letters wrote their names in a circle around the petition which might itself be torn into a less-than- rectangular shape. In this way the instigator could not be identified and group responsibility was taken for the action.

HOWARD HOPE.

... "Paparazzi round-up" in your last issue: the heir to the throne is Charles, not William. Charles has not been snapped with a "new girlfriend, one Kate Middleton". Perhaps longer lenses are called for...

SONIA MAY.

... Re: the Condoleezza Rice/Klingon lookalike in issue 1176.

Sorry to be pedantic, but B'Elanna Torres, shown in the picture opposite Ms Rice, is only half Klingon. Human father, Klingon mother. This probably explains why she looks less Klingon than the Secretary of State.

GUY BARTLE.

... Re: the two women with worried foreheads. The resemblance between them is entirely superficial: one is a representative of a nation renowned throughout the universe for their fierce aggression and militarism, whilst the other is merely an actress paid to play rather an unconvincing role in a long-running American dramatic fantasy.

STEVEN HAINES.

... I wish to take issue over the cover of Eye 1175 with President Bush writing a thank you letter to the president of Iraqland.

The suggestion that he can write is preposterous. I know it is only intended as humour but it really stretches the limits of credibility.

NICK HUTTON.

Letter from **Algiers**

from Our Own Correspondent

ALAS! Must all our new British friends be leaving us so soon? We have become so fond of your Lord Browne, who brought BP to our gas-rich desert wastes and now seems surplus to requirements. Or Tony Blair, our ally in the "global war on terror", also in the departure lounge.

Our president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, 70 in March and still proudly sporting a dazzling Bobby Charlton-style comb-over, has no such plans to move on. Perhaps this is why he so admires your Queen, a lady who knows how to rule into old age, with whom he took tea last summer. Bouteflika is scheming to persuade us all to back him in a referendum so he can serve a third term – he has been in power since his triumphant return from exile eight years ago.

As the next presidential election is not until 2009, this adds to a feeling that Boutef sees himself as immortal, but this being Algeria we will agree to vote "Yes"; to do otherwise would be rude, and dangerous. After more than a decade of civil war, when our paramilitary death squads battled against the wilder fringes of radical Islam while too many of our 30 million-plus population got caught in the crossfire, Bouteflika has brought a degree of peace and enjoys a good but careful relationship with the army.

Our military bosses, les décideurs, are always keen to intervene in politics and business for the public good, and they can indeed achieve miracles – such as converting their personal barracks into huge villas in the Algiers heights, or acquiring splendid Paris apartments or villas on Lake Geneva on a humble third world officer's pay.

Born in Morocco and with a reputation as something of a ladies' man (his long-suffering wife lives in Paris) Boutef's natural calling was as minister for foreign affairs, a job he held from 1965 until 1979, when President Houari Boumedienne died. Boutef was outgunned (literally) in the battle for succession, sidelined, convicted of fraud and amnestied before going into an exile made more comfortable by large retainers from the Abu Dhabi and Qatari rulers he "advised". These Gulf friends are now piling into new investments as the economy starts to boom thanks to record oil receipts and the outbreak of peace.

Our British friends want to exploit that peace dividend too – and we are particularly welcoming since Blair's government woke up to the UK's need to secure its energy supplies now North Sea production is in free fall. Only a few Essex men know that our now global-scale liquefied natural gas industry started with a humble LNG shipment to Canvey Island; our energy giant Sonatrach's return is somewhat bigger in scale. Algerian investments in Britain now count partnership in the giant new Isle of Grain regasification plant. How times change: until recently "Londonistan" offered open house to some of our more sought-after Islamists; it still hosts our most celebrated tycoon, billionaire businessman Abdelmoumen Rafik Khalifa, whom our government wants returned from his political asylum in Belgravia to face charges in Algiers.

Part of the reason for the change is down to the outgoing British ambassador, smooth Lesley Phillips looky-likey Andrew Tesoriere, who worked to upgrade the UK presence after a predecessor, citing security concerns, moved the embassy out of its prominent central Algiers location to take up a floor in our rather mediocre Algiers Hilton Hotel.

So unfortunate, then, that last month our Islamist crazies in the Salafyist Group for Preaching and Combat reminded us with an attack on oil workers that all is not yet well. But everything is relative: Boutef may be an extraordinarily vain little man fronting for an omnipotent and often nasty army. But he's a better option than fellow gas giants – Russia's poisonous Mr Putin or Iran's explosive Dr Ahmadinejad.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "At least forty-nine seriously ill people who died since April might still have been alive today, if these two doctors had attempted to save their lives," Borko Josifovski of the Belgrade Emergency Medical Service told reporters in the Serbian capital, "but they deliberately left them to die. For months, these two prioritised emergency calls where 'reanimation' was required. As soon as they smelled death, they would race to the site within minutes, but once there, did they try to resuscitate the patients? No. Instead, they'd contact a firm of private undertakers, report the body, and receive a percentage of the funeral director's fee for each confirmed death. Instead of trying to save lives, they traded in deaths."

Speaking in advance of a tribunal hearing, Dr Milomir Tufegdzic and Dr Zoran Milosevic both dismissed the allegations against them as "utter nonsense. If we turn up and a person is already dead, should we try to reanimate them anyway? Our long experience has taught us to estimate when to help a patient, and when it's too late." However, it emerged that both doctors had previously been fined by the Emergency Medical Service for racketeering in collusion with private undertakers, and the growing trade in fresh corpses has become a source of concern for the Serbian authorities. *(The Belgrade Times, 21/10/06. Spotter: Laura Craig Gray)*

– ● –

● *"Our historic full-size replica of HMS Bounty has often been hired by film and television companies," Margaret Ramsey told reporters in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, "ever since the 1960 Marlon Brando movie of Mutiny on the Bounty. Just recently, it was used in Pirates of the Caribbean with Johnny Depp, so when Mr Joone asked to hire it, to film a movie that he said was about 'Sinbad and a magic sceptre,' the request seemed perfectly normal. I even visited the ship when filming began, and it seemed to be a wholesome swashbuckling romp, just the sort of family entertainment we like to encourage. Only when it was released did I discover that Joone's 'Pirates' is actually a hardcore porn film, full of filth and lewdness and sexual perversion, and not at all the sort of thing we would ever have got involved in. I'm disgusted. Clearly, there are people out there who don't have morals."*

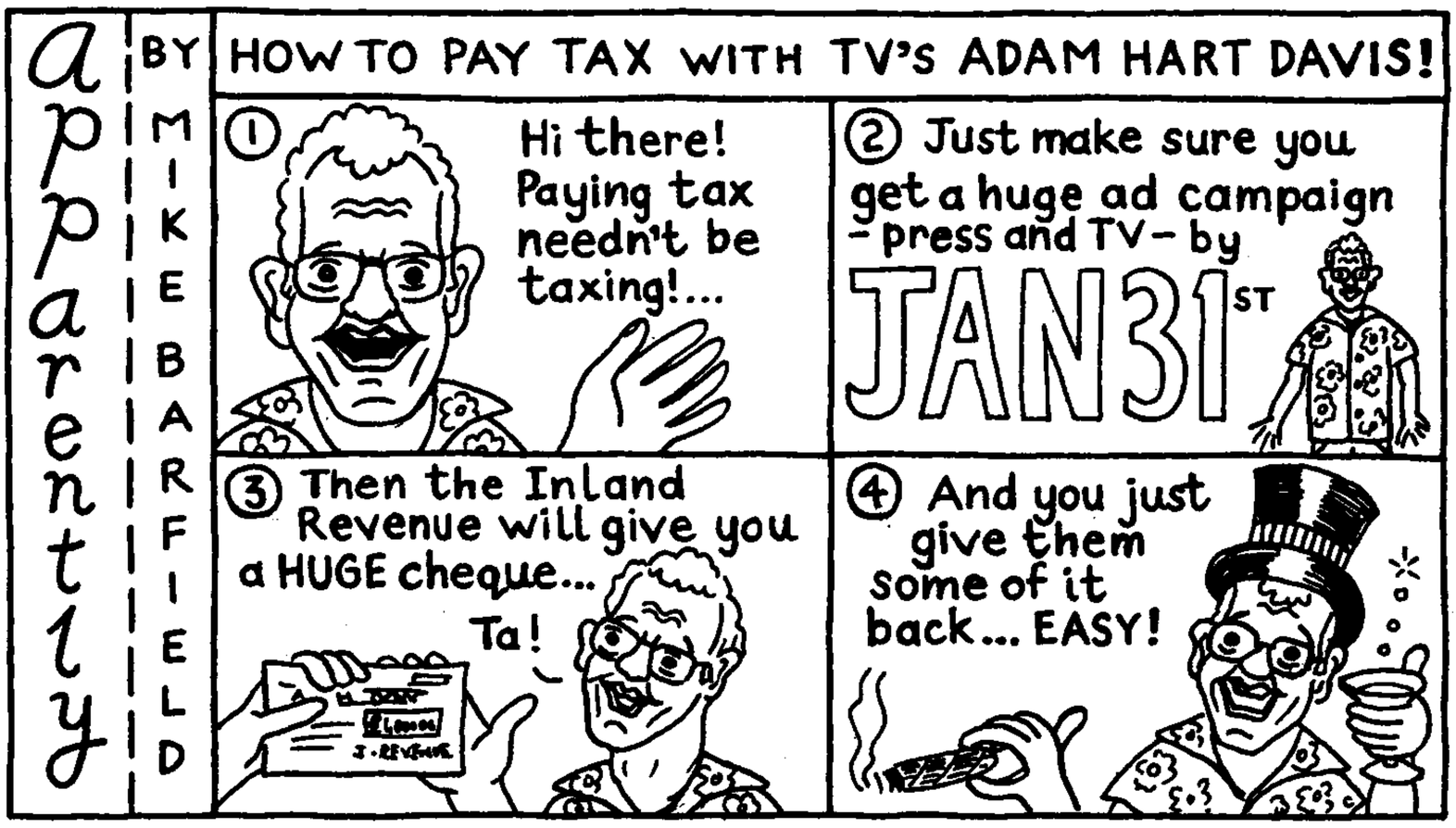
Joone, the Los Angeles-based director of the porn movie, insisted that he hadn't deceived the owners of the three-masted square rigger, which is regularly used as a floating summer camp for children. But Ms Ramsey announced that "future contracts will be tightened up, so we can close down any production we deem inappropriate." And Lunenburg's deputy mayor, David Dauphinee, recalled how his deeply pious grandfather had helped to construct the HMS Bounty replica. "He was a man who read his Bible every night after supper. He came from the old school, and if he knew about this porn film, his feelings would be hurt very badly." (Vancouver Sun, 11/5/06. Spotter: Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)

– ● –

● "These nasty rumours are totally ridiculous," Jimmy Chung told reporters outside his Chinese restaurant in Dundee, "but they've been spreading through the city for weeks. People have been saying we serve seagull instead of chicken, and they've even been phoning the council to ask if it's true, but it's totally absurd. Apart from anything else, chicken is cheap, and it's a lot easier to buy

some than to spend all day trying to catch seagulls. But the stories won't go away, and they're starting to affect business. We were going to open a second outlet in the city, but since these nasty rumours started, we've noticed a slump in business."

Chung then produced a letter from Dundee's head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards, confirming that the restaurant has complied with all food safety regulations, and has passed all routine inspections. "I can only think that the people spreading these rumours about seagulls are also in the restaurant business," Chung added, "and are upset that we're selling quality food at low prices." *(Dundee Evening Telegraph, 30/11/06. Spotter: Robert Thomson)*


Apparently
BY MIKE BARFIELD
HOW TO PAY TAX WITH TV'S ADAM HART DAVIS!
1
Hi there! Paying tax needn't be taxing!...
2
Just make sure you get a huge ad campaign - press and TV - by JAN31ST
3
Then the Inland Revenue will give you a HUGE cheque...
Ta!
4
And you just give them some of it back... EASY!

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo!

As you know, I've been very busy recently, dashing round the parish, sorting out all sorts of problems which various people have left on my plate (thanks a bundle, Dr Reid. No offence!). But I've noticed that there's one word that keeps on cropping up in people's conversations, and that is "conscience".

OK, let's look at this word, shall we?

One person might say "Oh, I can't do such-and-such a thing because my conscience tells me not to".

Another might say exactly the opposite!

So it's a pretty unreliable thing, this conscience, isn't it?

It could go one way or the other. And, hey, let's face it, there are some people who use this word "conscience" just as an excuse for doing something that they don't want to do for quite different reasons.

So it might be helpful to consider just where it is that we get this word from in the first place.

And, as so often, it was our friends the Greeks who originally came up with it; putting together two of their words *"kon"*, meaning "not knowing" and *"skientia"*, meaning "what to do"!

So "conscience" really means the state of being indecisive, dithering about all over the place and probably making a dreadful mess of things!

"So who needs it, man?" as it says in the Soul Bible.

Well, I for one certainly don't! Because I have always been blessed with something higher than conscience, namely the knowledge that whatever I do is right!

You won't find me dithering about all over the shop, undecided as to which path to take!

No, because I've got what you might call an internal satnav, which is there 24/7 to tell me "This is your route, Vicar – go, go, go!".

And you know what? "It faileth never", as the Good Book used to say. Even if, as sometimes happens, it tells me on one day to go down one road, and the next day to turn round and go in exactly the opposite direction!

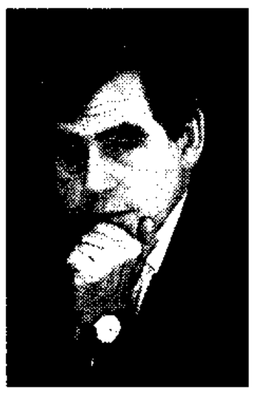
So let's hear rather less about this idea that "obeying *your* conscience" is somehow a good thing, shall we?

If you want to know what's right or wrong, why not just ask your vicar?

Because, let's face it, isn't that what I'm here for?

Tony

Congratulations!



Well done to Mr Brown for being voted the 97th sexiest man in the Parish. (Yes, it's true!) All I can say is that it's very unfair of cynics to point out that there **are** only 97 people in the parish!!!

Mind you, if they had a poll for the man who is worst at adding up his sums properly and walking around St Albion's looking miserable all the time, we all know who would win, don't we? *(No offence, Gordon, and no job either!)* T.B.

No Apology!

The Vicar wishes it to be known that he has absolutely nothing to apologise for in deciding that he had better things to do than to attend last week's discussion by the PCC on the right and wrongs of the great crusade against the Evil One.

There was absolutely no point in hearing the same old arguments which we've heard a million times before from Mr Dobson and his like. Everybody knows where I stand on this one, so there was no need for me to be there. And just for the record, I had a long-standing engagement to address our local Chamber of Commerce on the important question of the siting of the new Tesco Express Metro Superstore which we are all so much looking forward to, as it will complement the other three Tesco stores which our parish is blessed with already. T.B.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE VICAR'S OECOLOGICAL SERMON AT THE CHURCH OF ST BONO IN DAVOS

As the great Orkneys Holy Man, St Magnus of Magnusson, so memorably put it, "I've started so I won't finish". And that's just how I feel! There's so much still to do, yet I've achieved so much. Just look at the world's biggest problems that I've solved. Africa – sorted! Global Warming – a thing of the past! Peace in the Holy Land – gotcha! Well, actually, Peace everywhere! The Ashes – Five wins on the trot!

But hey, even though I'm an idealist, I'm also a pragmatist and I realise that there will be other problems to solve in the future. Famine in Africa, the threat of Global Warming, war in the Middle East, well, actually, war everywhere. And don't forget the lamentable state of English cricket!

So, there's a big job there for somebody. And can *you* think of anyone better than the vicar to do it? I can't.

So let's all join together in that wonderful old Scottish hymn, No. 94 *"Keep right on till the end of the road (Keep Gordon out till the end)"*

To Remember In Your Prayers

● Ruth Turner, my faithful "gatekeeper" of a secretary, who, as you know, has been one of my most loyal helpers around the vicarage for some years. But now Ruth finds herself in trouble with the police, who even came round at 6.30 in the morning to arrest her for no reason at all. Let us pray that in future Ruth remembers that when you delete an email, you're not deleting it from the hard drive. Amen! T.B.

DAMAGED WRECK 'BREAKING UP FAST'

by Our Maritime Correspondent
Marie Celeste

CONCERN increased last night over the fate of the washed-up 'Natoniblair' which, after its 9-year voyage, had recently spent a considerable time drifting aimlessly, before being abandoned by its crew in a frantic scramble to save themselves. The weather-beaten hulk finally ended up on the rocks and sinking fast, as it failed to beat the fast-turning tide of public opinion.

Haul At Sea

The disaster has proved beneficial to some, however, as the doomed wreck's once-precious cargo lay at the mercy of those who found themselves presented with an unmissable opportunity. "I managed to grab one or two things for myself that I liked, but the rest was just rubbish," said one local scavenger, David Cameron, who *(cont. p94)*

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam *Grandstand*

So. Farewell
Then
Grandstand –
BBC Sports
Flagship.

"Accrington Stanley
Two. Tranmere
Rovers Two."

Yes, that was
Your catchphrase.

But the
Final whistle has
Blown.

And there
Is no
Extra time.

E.J. Thribb, 17½
(Stirling Albion 0)

You can hear a podcast of this poem read by Desmond Lynam on www.thribbute.co.uk

NEWS OF THE SCREWS

IT IS very rare in today's blame-free culture for a senior public figure to resign on a matter of principle. That is why Mr Sid Filth, the editor of my newspaper, the News of the Screws, deserves hearty commendation for his prompt resignation when he discovered that one of his staff, Mr Ken Fags, had illegally hacked into the mobile phones of members of the royal family.

Though Mr Filth had no knowledge of Mr Fags' activities, he honourably acepted full responsibility for telling him to do it and for not managing to hush it all up.

Gnome International will not tolerate its editors being caught and embarrassing their proprietor. I was therefore delighted that Mr Filth chose to resign when I told him to clear his desk and get out of the office. His place will be taken by Mr Reg Nasty, a highly respected journalist with impeccable credentials who will hopefully get some juicier royal stories than his incompetent predecessors, Messrs Filth and Fags.

Lord Digger of Dirt,
Screws International,
New York-Beijing-Wapping.

That 10-point Plan for Teaching Britishness in Full

1. 'Chinese Traditional Drums' to replace 'Recorders' in all Primary school music classes.
2. Children to be taught about the slave trade in Year 9 Physics.
3. 'How the British Empire Ruined the World' to be incorporated as a module of the GCSE PE syllabus.
4. New citizenship A level: *How the Arabs invented algebra whilst British natives were living in caves unable to speak.*
5. Ur...
6. ...du
7. That's it.

This plan was compiled by top Government Britishness Advisor, Sir Kenneth Sudoku, former headmaster of the Lord Adonis Academy, Peckham.

THIS WEEK'S RADIO
What You Missed

The Today Programme

Humphrys: It's a huge, inefficient institution that consumes ever-increasing sums of public money, but seems to deliver a poorer and poorer service. Where **does** all the money go?

But enough of the BBC... this week let's talk about the NHS.

Coincidence Corner

Police make enquiries

Government makes announcement

A Taxi Driver writes

Paul Dacre (cab no. 7426324) on the "Institutional Bias of the BBC".

Blimey listen to that on the radio guv, bloody BBC letting Blair off the hook! British Broadcasting Corporation? The Blair Broadcasting Corporation I call it! Bush House? Anti-Bush House in my book! White City? Pinko City more like! The Today Programme – they should call it the Toady Programme, the way they treat Tony and his mates! And the newspapers are no better! Guardian? Independent? Times? They're all up Blair's bum, aren't they guv? Do you know what I'd do if I had my way? String 'em up! It's the only language they understand. I'll tell you what, though, have you seen the way house prices keep going up? Not everything is bad is it? Not that they'd tell you on the BBC – or Biased Bollocks Crap as I call it. Ha ha ha! I had that Richard Littlejohn in the back of my paper once. Very clever man.

NEXT WEEK: Charles Moore (The Metropolitan Hansom Cabriolet Service Number One) on why spats are making a comeback (surely "Tories", Ed.)

COMMUTER FURY AT TRANSPORT HELL

by Our Weather Staff **Jon Snow and David Frost**

A FLURRY of trains was blamed last night for chaos on the rail network, leaving angry commuters furious at the disruption.

"We don't expect *any* trains at this time of year," said Mr Angry of Tunbridge Wells, "and under normal circumstances we would stay at home and build a snowman."

This year, however, passengers were taken by surprise when "a very thin coverage" of trains appeared on tracks around the country.

Said a spokesman for the rail network, "We had no idea there would be any trains in January. They were not forecast and we regret that the light scattering of services that were *not* cancelled has ruined everyone's enjoyment of the winter weather.

"We can assure customers that as soon as there is any more snow – or even a touch of frost – services will return to normal and we will shut down the entire network."

ON OTHER PAGES

- Apologies cancelled again **2**
- Wrong sort of firms running the railways **3**
- Your replacement buses tonight **94**

NATION'S MORALITY WASHED UP

BRANSCOMBE BOOK BOUNTY SHOCK

by Our Man In Devon **X.E. Ter**

DEVONSHIRE police were last night appealing for volunteers to help in removing what was called a huge "book slick" which has spilled onto a local beach from the stricken container ship *Napoli*.

Since the freighter grounded last week after being abandoned by its crew in hurricane-force winds, millions of tons of unsold copies of David Blunkett's diaries, *All Washed Up*, have floated ashore, covering one of Devon's best-loved tourist beaches with a slick of soggy paper several feet deep and three miles long.

Wet Blunkett

"We are in a severe crisis situation here," said a spokesman for Devon police, Inspector Sid Mouth, last night. "We are asking members of the public to come to Branscombe as soon as possible to assist us by removing as many of these unwanted publications as they can take away.

"We have recommended that they bring suitable vehicles, such as wheelbarrows, white vans, skips, articulated lorries and so forth – but so far the book pollution problem on this beach is as bad as ever, and there is evidence that local wildlife is being affected. A cormorant has been taken into care by the RSPB after attempting to eat its way through chapter one."

It is understood that the consignment of ten million unsold copies of the Blunkett diaries was on its way to be incinerated at the world's largest waste disposal facility in China.

SOPHISTICATED NEW SNOW PREDICTOR

What They Say About It

"I never knew such things existed" – *South Eastern Railway*

"A miracle" – *local councillors*

"Far too complicated to use. All trains cancelled today" – *London Underground*

100% Accurate

BUSH TO ACT ON 'GLOBAL WARRING'

by Our Political Climate Change Staff **Jon Snow**

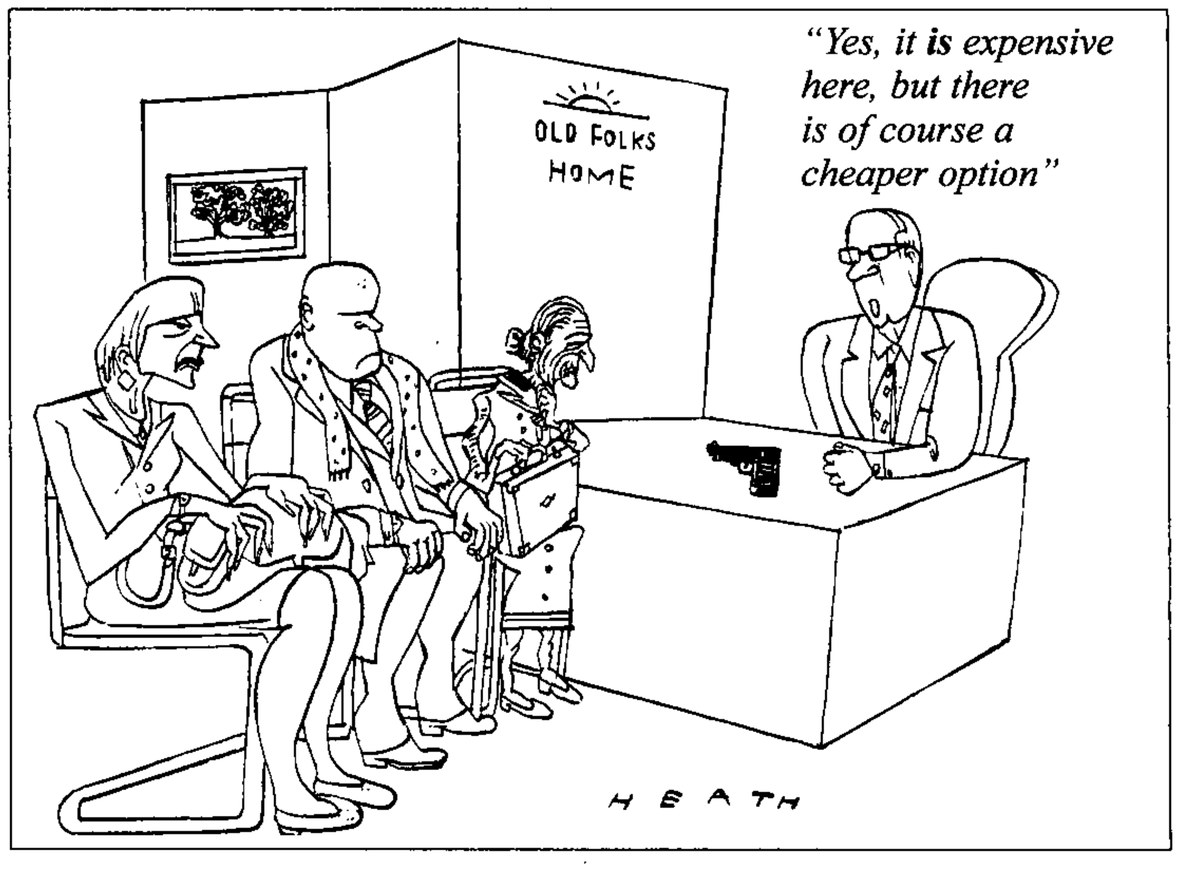
THE PRESIDENT of the United States, Mr George Bush, used his televised State of the Union Address to announce his determination to act at once on dangerous phenomenon known as 'Global Warring'.

Previously Mr Bush was not keen to admit that 'Global Warring' was taking place, preferring to talk about 'Regime Change' or the vaguer term 'Things Hotting up a Bit'.

Now, however, President Bush has acknowledge the part that the United States has played in the escalation of 'Global Warring'.

"There is only one way," said Mr Bush, "to put an end to Global Warring. And that's by invading Iran, North Korea, Lebanon, Indonesia and possibly France."

"Our target," he told the American people, "will be to go to war with at least one fifth of the planet."



"How's your marriage?"

Advertisement

RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN RUN

POLICE LOG

Neasden Central Police Station

0815 hrs Emergency call received from the former municipal swimming baths (now "Pools 'R' Us") in Hugo Chavez Avenue (formerly Ramsay Macdonald Street). The Pool Leisure Resource Co-ordinator, Ms Shelley Shellsuit, reported a very serious infringement of the Dangerous Diving Regulations 2006, implementing the EU's Watersports and Marine Pastimes Directive, 2004/45. On arrival at the facility, officers forcibly detained a Mr Reginald Pimlott, 65, who had been observed by Ms Shellsuit entering the pool headfirst by means of a diving action. It was explained to Mr Pimlott that this showed reckless disregard for the safety of all users of the pool, including himself, although at the time of the offence he was alone in the facility.

Mr Pimlott became abusive, claiming that he had been "diving in this pool since 1946". Unfortunately the accused then attempted to evade arrest, striking his head on the side of PC Stanmore's boot, thus falling into the pool and drowning. Next of kin were informed.

1023 hrs A serious incident occurred on the station premises, involving one of our recent, very welcome recruits from the ethnic community, namely WPC Niqab-Burqa. The WPC was asked to step up to receive her Grade 6 Certificate in Community Awareness Best Practice from Superintendent Pinner. When the Superintendent extended his right hand in order to shake that of the recipient, WPC Niqab-Burqa, she recoiled in understandable protest and accused the Superintendent of a deliberately inflammatory and insulting racist gesture. She explained that it was against her religion to have any physical contact with any man who was not her father, brother, uncle, grandfather or other male blood relative, as is specified in Chapter 94 of the Holy Book, the Q'ran. The Superintendent has been suspended, pending the outcome of a full enquiry into this disgraceful incident. This is to be carried out by the Islamophobic Discrimination Squad (IDS) of the Metropolitan Police, under the direction of Commander Niqab-Burqa, uncle of the victim of this horrifying attack. WPC Niqab-Burqa has been given five years' compassionate leave on full pay.

1232 hrs A report was received from a Community Support Officer, CSO Dawn Raid, who had been patrolling in the Winifred Mandela shopping precinct, when she observed what she believed might constitute an illegal item displayed in the shop window of Gameboy & Son, the Toy and Novelty Emporium ("You're Only Young Once"). No immediate action was taken by CSO Raid, but twelve hours later an armed response unit was dispatched to the premises, where they were forced to enter the shop via the front window, whereupon they seized four small packets of cards bearing the label "Happy Families".

On close examination, the cards were found to be in serious contravention of the new Gender Orientation and Sexual Equality Regulations 2006, implementing the EC's Prevention of Discrimination (Sexual Equality and Gender Orientation) directive, 2004/46.

None of the families featured in the game were same-sex partnerships of either a gay or lesbian nature – i.e. Mr Bun the Baker was married to Mrs Bun the Baker's Wife, and not to Mr Cake the Other Baker. Similarly Mrs Bun was not portrayed as the live-in civil partner of Ms Sausage, the butcher's lesbian daughter, nor were they shown as living happily with their two adopted children, Master Onanugu from Nigeria and Ms Polly Pot from Cambodia.

"The more closely we examined this game," as Sergeant Northolt noted in his report to the Crown Prosecution Service, "the more seriously we realised that it was a highly dangerous object which needed to be rendered safe immediately. Under the direction of PC Hainault of our Explosives Division, the packs of cards were destroyed in a controlled explosion, which unfortunately razed to the ground the entire shop, including the late Mr Sidney Gameboy, the toyshop owner, Nora Gameboy, the shop owner's wife, Master Archie Gameboy, the toyshop owner's son, and Miss Jade Gameboy, the toyshop owner's daughter."

1513 hrs A series of messages was left on the station answering machine, recording various acts of murder, rape and grievous bodily harm which had been committed in the Neasden district, following the release of 317 A-Category prisoners back into the community as a result of prison overcrowding at Neaswood Scrubs High Security Open Prison. Callers were redirected to our Crime Prevention Counselling Service in Lahore, where they could listen to soothing extracts from classical music by a Mr Vivaldi until an agent was available to tell them that the police station was closed.

A Pompous Statement from Channel Four

Channel Four is firmly against the bullying of minority groups and deplores any attempt to incite hatred against any person on the grounds of who they are or where they come from particularly if the victims of this bullying are directors of national broadcasting companies. These people have an absolute right not to be abused merely because they work for Channel Four and because they happen to belong to a small group of individuals who believe that Big Brother should continue to be shown on national television. We believe that using insulting or pejorative language to describe Channel Four directors is unacceptable, particularly phrases such as 'cynical, greedy tossers' or 'cowardly, self-serving hypocrites'. Worst of all is the intimidatory call for Channel Four directors to "Go home and get someone decent to run the Channel". Such remarks are merely the result of the kind of ignorance and stupidity that are all too prevalent in a society which has been reduced to watching Big Brother.

© Channel Poor

TV PROGRAMME PLANNING
WHAT WE FUCKING NEED IS MORE FUCKING PROGRAMMES WHERE EVERY-FUCKING-BODY SPEAKS LIKE REAL FUCKING PEOPLE..

HUGE ROW DOESN'T BLOW UP OVER CHANNEL 4 RACISM

by Our Broadcasting Staff **Jonathan Mullah**

THERE were no thousands of protests to the broadcasting regulator Ofcom last week after the Channel 4 programme Despatches showed a group of people making racist remarks.

There were no questions in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister did not intervene and nor did Mr Brown make a statement on racism and British culture during his tour of India.

Not Goody Enough

The programme featured a number of speakers in "the Big Mosque", making deliberately offensive remarks about Jews, Christians and Westerners, openly using the pejorative term "Kuffaar" and implying that such persons lacked basic hygiene and were "filthy". The bullying ringleaders were captured clearly on film, as were a coterie of sniggering admirers who laughed at their suggestions that non-believers should be killed.

Jaded

However, no one withdrew million-pound sponsorship from "the Big Mosque" and there were no worries that the careers of those revealed as bigots might be over. There were no calls for them to be expelled from "the Big Mosque" or from Britain and *(cont. p. 94)*

The Sun Says — God Bless You Shilpa

Today everyone in Britain can hold their head up high. Justice has been done and your triumph tells the world that the Brits are not racist bigots but fairminded folk. Three cheers then for Shilpa and even more cheers for ourselves for making Britain great again!

On other pages

● Shilpa – where's her passport then? And how long is she staying? p. 94

GLENDA SLAGG

FLEET STREET'S GOODY-GOODY (Geddit?!)

■ Shh... Jade!?! We never want to hear from you again. Why don'tcha just clear off back to that gutter you should never have climbed out of in the first place, and take your old slag of a mother with you?!? Along with your half-witted apology for a boyfriend while you're at it!!?! OK, so you're educationally sub-normal, fat and ugly!?! But that doesn't give you the right to commit racist bullying on one of India's most useful leading ladies!?!! No wonder the whole world threw up as they watched you behaving like a cross between a wild pig and a member of the Gestapo!?! Frankly, it made me and millions of others ashamed to be alive!!?!

■ Shh... ut up everybody!!?! Going on about Jade Goody!!?! What's all the fuss about??! She only says what you hear in a thousand pubs every Saturday night!?!?? It's only a television show, for gawd's sake!?! What have we come to as a nation when we go all mental over a few harmless jokes and some cross words over some overpaid curry queen from Calcutta?!? Shh... ut up, Shilpa, and shh... ove off home to poppadom land where you belong!??!

■ Shh... ameful!!! Have we got nothing better to do as a nation than sit around all day long talking about some tacky celebrity reality show?!? You wanna know about real reality, mister?!? There are people dying out there!?! Millions of them!!?! Bombs are going off!?! The ice caps are melting!?! There are huge gales blowing half the country away!?! And all the newspapers can do is drivel on about Jade and Shilpa, as if anyone knew who they were – or could care less!?! Time to wake up and smell the perfume!?! (Geddit?!)

■ Shh... irty Shilpa and Jokey Jade have done us all a favour!! So thank Gawd for Celebrity Big Brother, for taking our minds off all the horrible things going on in the world!?! The terrorists!?!! The global warming!?! The trees falling on your car!??! They've given us a good laugh and a little bit of warmth to melt the winter snow!?! *(Shurely 'a profound insight into the state of modern Britain'? Ed.)* When they start handing out the Oscars, it should be Dame Jadi, not Dame Judi, who gets "Best Actress" (geddit?!?).

■ *HERE THEY are – Glenda's Channel Four Bully Boys!!*

● **Luke Johnson,** Channel Four's chairman!?!! You can deliver your pizza round to my place any time!?! But make sure it's American Hot?!! Geddit?!?

● **Lord Puttnam,** non-executive director of Channel Four?!?? Come round to my place and I'll set your chariot on fire?!?? Geddit?!?!

● **Peter Bazelgette!?!** Crazy name, really disgusting programme!?!!

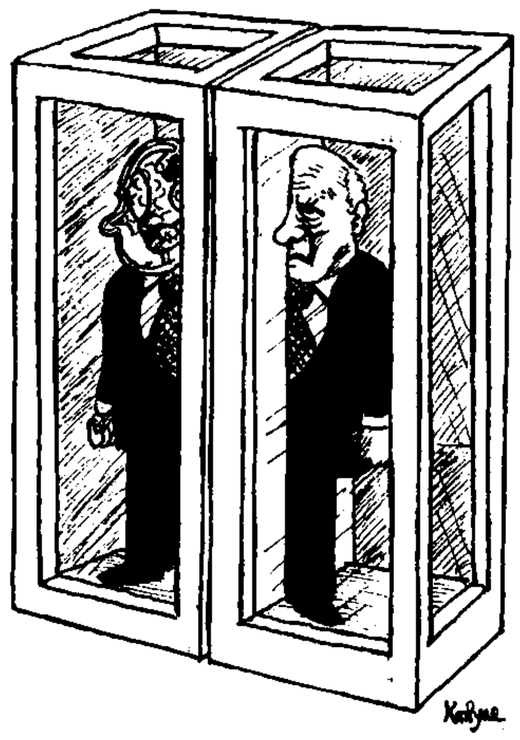
Byeeee!!!

Indians Debate Big Brother Discrimination Row

"Don't bother with his opinion, he's an Untouchable"

REID TO SPLIT HIMSELF IN TWO

by Our Home Affairs Correspondent
Phil Jails



THE Home Secretary, Dr John Reid, has announced a controversial plan to solve the chaos in the Home Office, which has been plagued by a series of scandals involving unchecked immigration, the release of paedophiles and murderers and the overcrowding in Britain's jails.

"By splitting myself in two," he said, "I will get twice as much done. Half of me will be in charge of cock-ups and blunders – and so will the other half."

The tough-talking Dr Reid continued, "The Home Office will no longer be a laughing stock that is unfit for purpose. It will in future fulfil its purpose of being an object of derision."

Dr Reid and Dr Reid are 63.

THE ALTERNATIVE VOICE

CEDRIC SPART (Co-Chair of the Tufnell Park Gays and Lesbians Alliance Against the Iraq War, Hunting and the Catholic Adoption Society).

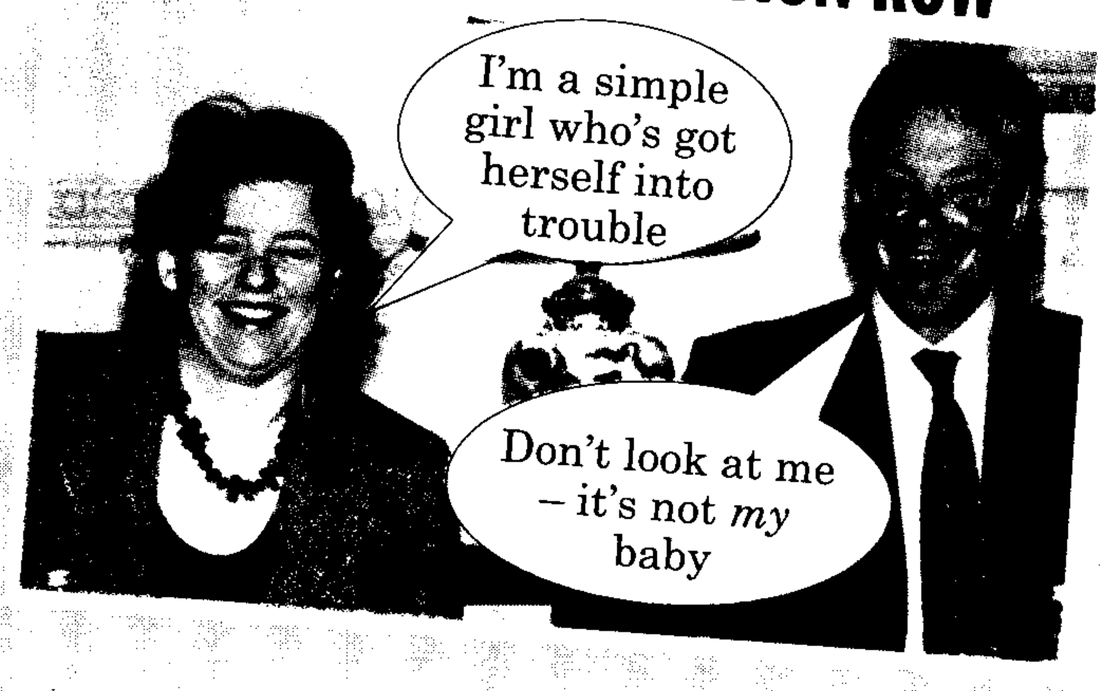
Once again the homophobic bigots who run the Catholic Church have come out in force to blackmail the elected government of this country in its bid to end the centuries of hatred and persecution of gays and lesbians in denying them their basic human right to have children. What do these so-called Archbishops, who dress up in women's clothes and protect homosexual priests, know about gays... er... for once the government has got it right in standing up to the homophobes and making it a criminal offence not to have a gay or lesbian parent... er... this is a great day for tolerance and equality and it's time the Catholics and all the other religious bigots were silenced for once and for all, except, of course, our Muslim friends, who have every right to believe that homosexuality is a sin, so long as they don't bomb my home... er... *(cont. p. 94)*

CHESS NEWS

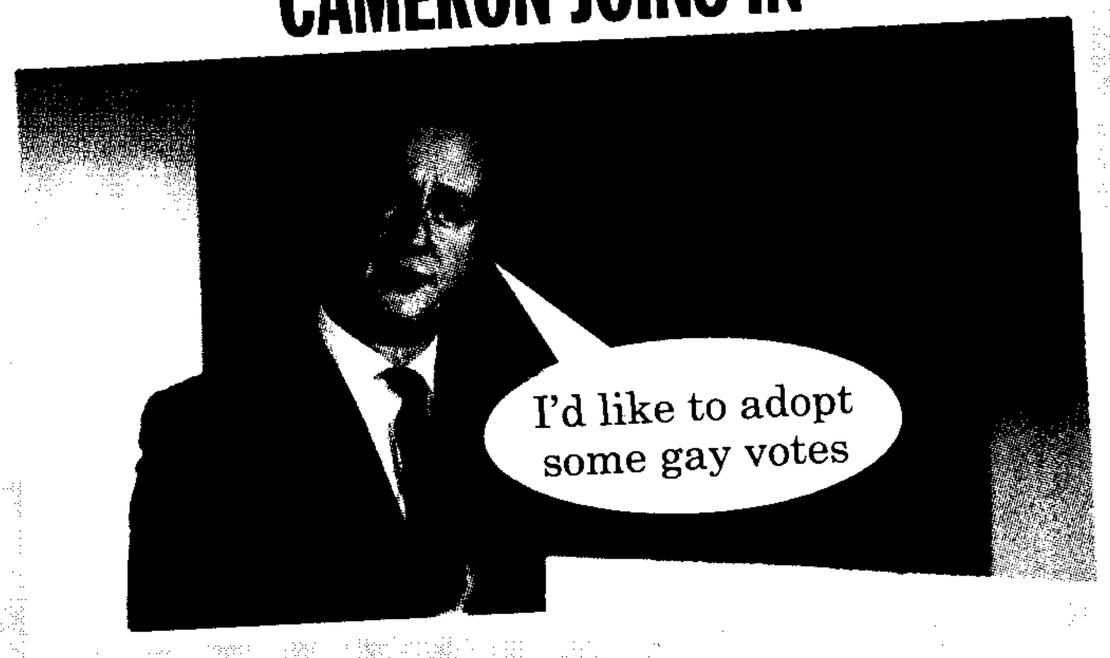
"Ah! The Bush defence"

A WEEK IN PICTURES

CATHOLICS IN ADOPTION ROW



CAMERON JOINS IN



CLINTON FOR PRESIDENT

BURQA-FREE POLICE: WHAT COULD HAPPEN

Are you coming quietly, Sir?
Yes, the sight of your ears and the merest touch of your hand has inflamed my masculine passion and clouded my thoughts with impurities

DIARY

JOE ESZTERHAS

How you can be like me

An executive whose wife I was screwing at the time came on to me. He wanted me to rewrite a movie about Queen Victoria of England. He appreciated the way I'd written roles for independent, empowered, liberated women in my hit movie *Showgirls* – and he wanted his slice.

The first screenwriter had contracted the art disease bad and made the whole thing too fucking historic, all prithee this ma'am and forsooth my fucking liege and fancy dance numbers in ballgowns, so's it would bore the ass off an asshole.

He'd even set it in the Olden Fucking Days, which fucked up any idea of a hard rock soundtrack and a spaceship. FACT: No movie set over 25 years ago has ever grossed more than $100 million at the box office.

So this is what I said to the schmuck producer. I said, there's only two things you need to know about Queen Victoria. She had a pair of tits on her like you wouldn't believe and she could fuck the hind legs off a sperm whale at a hundred yards. He said, we speak the same language, you got the job. Result? 2.7 million dollars for three weeks rewrite.

First thing I did, I took all the fancy ballgowns off the women. They dance naked or not at all, I told the director. The movie – *Reign Woman* – is in production, with Sharon Stone as Victoria, Scarlett Johansson as her sexy sidekick Disraeli, Christopher Walken as her bitter, pervert husband, Albert, a knife-wielding bastard with revenge in his mind and a tube of KY jelly in his top pocket, and – to lend the movie class – Sir Ian McKellen as Rawlinson, Queen Victoria's loyal lapdance instructor.

Why no good movie could ever be made about Beatrix Potter

Her ass was way too big.

Don't listen to the jerk historians

A top exec at Paramount said, hey, he was just wild about my classic movie scene in Basic Instinct when Sharon Stone uncrosses her legs and for a split-second you ***see it all***. Said he wanted to offer me $2.2 million to write the same scene – tender yet meaningful – into *Thirst Lady*, a biopic he was making about the sex life of Jackie K.

Soon, for an extra $3.1 million, I'd been hired to write the whole screenplay for a top director whose wife I was screwing on the kitchen floor at the time.

The Dallas scene was a stand-out. For reasons of dramatic tension, I made the first and second shots blow the head off the driver of the vehicle, giving JFK the chance to grab the wheel and make the hi-action getaway. One thing was for sure: we weren't in the business of losing our hero in the third reel, no matter what the jerk historians might demand.

JFK *(wiping a pint of the driver's blood off his brow, changing to top gear, and driving away at 170 mph)*: Jeez, Jackie, there's a mean bastard out there. That bullet was meant for me!

Jackie Kennedy: Stay cool, Jack! Let's get the fuck outta here!

Jackie moves to the front passenger seat. In doing so, she crosses and uncrosses her legs. For a second, the audience clocks that she is ***wearing no panties***.

As if from nowhere, a historic third shot rings out. It just misses JFK, and instead zaps through the diamond button holding Jackie's tight-waisted $7000 Chanel jacket together. Jackie is wearing no brassiere, so her tits pop clean out. A cheer erupts from the crowd. 18 floors up in the Dallas book depository, Lee Harvey Oswald puts down his rifle, grabs for his binoculars and begins pleasuring himself.

JFK *(laughing good-heartedly at the wheel)*: Woooh! Dallas sure ain't seen a show like this before, honey!

Jackie Kennedy: This excitement's sure as hell made me horny, Jack – let's drive somewhere kinda private and make love!

JFK *(swerving car to a halt, ripping off his shirt)*: I heard there's a grassy knoll somewhere near!

Jackie K *(pulling off her skirt)*: Too right there is, big boy!

The movie was a box-office smash, earning more than $400 million worldwide. And when was the last time you read a history book? Yep – you wanna be a historian, don't shit on my movie.

Why Dame Helen Mirren will never make a top Hollywood actress

Don't give me that Dame bullshit, her ass is way too big

.

Why the French can't make movies

French woman wakes up, talks French, gets out of bed, has breakfast, goes shopping, talks French, comes back, thinks about lunch, visits her mother, talk French, maybe goes for a stroll, sees child, talks French, movie ends.

Where the fucking fuck's the fucking movie in that? Don't fuck with me, it's straight-to-fucking-video.

This is the way.

Pay a screenwriter minimum $2 million dollars upfront for a first draft script. Something like this.

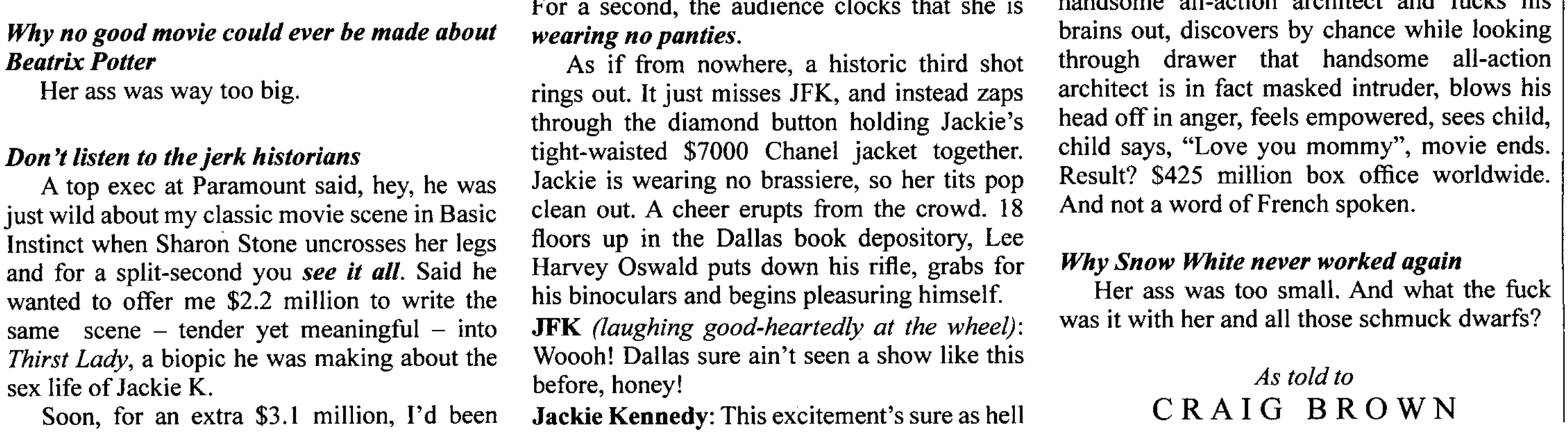
American woman is woken up by gunshot, stripped naked and tied up by masked intruder, manages to untie herself with teeth, goes shopping, meets handsome all-action architect in queue, comes back, thinks about lunch, tracks down masked intruder and tries to blow his head off, misses, runs traumatised to handsome all-action architect and fucks his brains out, discovers by chance while looking through drawer that handsome all-action architect is in fact masked intruder, blows his head off in anger, feels empowered, sees child, child says, "Love you mommy", movie ends. Result? $425 million box office worldwide. And not a word of French spoken.

Why Snow White never worked again

Her ass was too small. And what the fuck was it with her and all those schmuck dwarfs?

As told to

CRAIG BROWN


THE ORGANISERS OF THE CHARITY BALL FOR UNICEF, SIR.
NOT AGAIN. WHAT DO THEY WANT NOW?
THEY'RE ASKING IF YOU'LL RECORD A PERSONAL ANSAPHONE MESSAGE TO BE AUCTIONED AT THE BALL...
OH NO...! GROAN GROAN...
WHAT SHALL I TELL THEM?
I'M NOT IN.
HE SAYS: OKAY, BUT NOTHING FANCY. HE'LL JUST SAY "I'M NOT IN" BASICALLY.
THAT'S WONDERFUL!

Literary Review

One million years P.C.

The Cleft
Doris Lessing
(Fourth Estate, £16.99)

Dear Aunty Doris,
My boyfriend said he loved me so I shagged him. Now I seen him with another girl. What should I do?
Jilted Jane of E17.

Dear Jilted Jane,

You know, dear, relations between the sexes have been fraught since the dawn of time. Yet, as I describe in my new book, there is a fascinating theory that in the beginning there were only women, who called themselves "clefts" because that's what our bits look like, don't they dear, and they spent all day lolling about by the sea like seals and having babies by accident or magic or something to do with the wind or the waves. I still haven't quite worked it out actually, even though the book's been published. And their babies are all girls too, until one day they have a boy baby, with horrid lumpy squirty bits, and they think it's a monster and they sacrifice it to the eagles on the "killing rock". Only the eagles don't kill it, they take it the other side of the mountain and give it to some mummy deer to suckle. And there are more and more of these freaks called "squirts" and then some of the clefts make friends and have sex with the squirts and quite like it, and human society is born, and everything goes downhill from then onwards, as you know. If I were you, dear, I'd dump him. There are plenty more squirts up in the trees.

Dear Aunty Doris,
I've been a dyed in the woolly thought processes feminist since the Seventies, when I burned my bra with the best of them, and my knickers too, to liberate myself from the oppressive cycle of the washer-dryer syndrome. I loved your iconic early books like The Golden Notebook. *But this novel of yours,* The Cleft, *has got me all confused. Are you saying that your proto-hominid females who laze about on the beach having unplanned pregnancies and killing or mutilating any offspring who fail to match their gender-centric criteria represent some sort of post-fem paradigm shift, or have you just sold out like Fay and Germaine and started saying that women without men are like bicycles in a fish tank, er…*
Confused of North London

Dear Confused,

The Primrose Path (or Hill) of feminism was never smooth but was always strewn with sticky red seaweed especially during the new moon, just like the rather dubious menstrual metaphor I use in my book, and what you've got to realise is that this is not a feminist tract, it's just a novel, and not a very good one at that, but at my age you can't be too fussy. As I say in my introduction, we women are the "basic and primal human stock" and men were just a "cosmic afterthought". Well, those wonderful books I wrote when I was young are the basic and primal stock of my oeuvre, and this flimsy short story, padded out to novel length with a dodgy framing device involving a retired Roman senator in the time of Nero supposedly piecing the story together from some old scrolls in the library, and full of endless questions about what the earliest human communities might have been like, is just a "comic afterthought". Only it's not even comic, it's rather sad really.

Dear Aunty Doris,
You once pulled a fantastic stunt on the phoney celebrity-obsessed literary establishment by sending lots of publishers a novel you'd written under a different name. After they'd all rejected it on its merits, it was revealed that it had been written by no less a personage than yourself, a famous literary iconess, and immediately it got a massive print run, thus utterly proving that your celebrity had nothing to do with it! So anyway, is this the obverse stunt, where you peddle some half-baked post-feminist creation myth under your own name, and then turn round and say: look, this is drivel and yet you still published it because I'm a celebrity and if I told you it was actually written by my cleaning woman you'd have thrown it onto the slush pile to rot for evermore, right?

Dear Unsigned,

At the public readings that one does to promote one's books, there's always some sad miserable failure who gets up at the back and shouts rude remarks until the security guards kindly remove him (it's always a him: I would guess you too are a squirt?) Now off you go, you naughty beast and don't spoil my little joke.

Dear Aunty Doris,
I'm a man, yeah? And what I reelly wanna know is, why've I got nipples?
Jack from Elstree

Dear Jack,

You know dear, people may laugh but your question is not as daft as it might sound. It actually proves what I've been saying all along in my wonderful new novel about how men are just a mutant variation of the female prototype. I don't suppose you know your Y-chromosome from your X-factor but the truth is men are "unstable and erratic" whereas women have "a natural harmony with the ways of the world". That's what I say in my book and I don't expect a fly in the primordial soup like yourself to refute it.

Dear Aunty Doris,
I'm on work experience, actually, helping your editor at Fourth Estate. You know that very rough first draft you sent us of your new novel? The one about the origin of men and women as different species? I was supposed to send you a list of suggestions for rewriting and I'm afraid there were sooo many things wrong I just hadn't the nerve. Sorree! And the next thing I know, it got accidentally sent off to the typesetters! Ooops! Still, at least it got you onto Start the Week and Newsnight Review, and it seems to have been incredibly politely reviewed in all the broadsheets, so perhaps I'll keep my job in publishing after all.

Books & Bookmen

■ THE revelation in Radio 4's *Document* last week that French Prime Minister Guy Mollet requested a merger between his country and Britain after the Suez crisis in 1956 was enthusiastically followed up by Fleet Street.

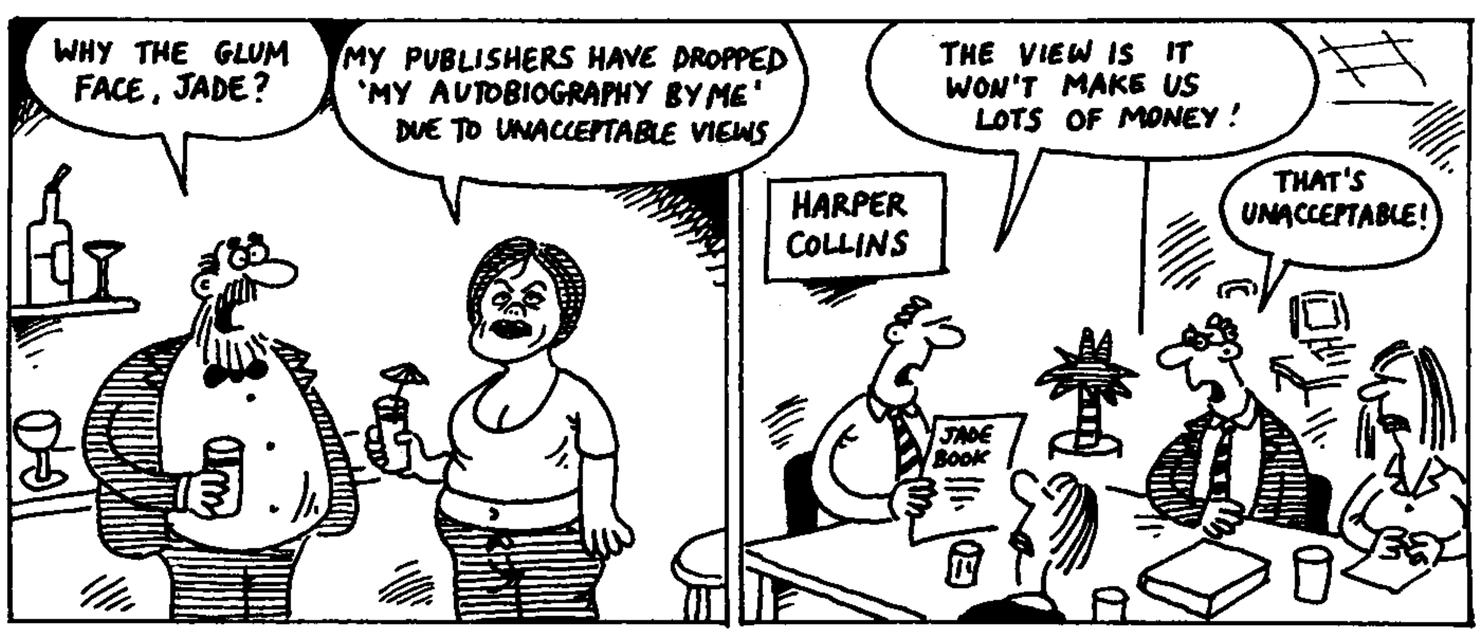
The *Times, Sun, Guardian, Independent, Mirror, Financial Times, Express* and *Telegraph* all devoted news stories and excruciating "wry looks" at the idea from their columnists. "Documents describing the reaction of British civil servants were among secret papers opened to the public 20 years ago but not discovered until now," shrieked the *Indy*.

Quite right – unless you count their exhumation and extensive analysis in Sir Anthony Nutting's book *No End of a Lesson*, published in 1967, the *Sunday Times* Insight team's 1,400-word report "France tried to join the Commonwealth" in September 1987, or Keith Kyle's book *Suez*, published in 1991.

PLAGIARISM CORNER

"Walk through the various spots in Los Angeles, and it's easy to spot the out-of-towners. They're the ones reading the trades in public. Out-of-towners think that *Variety* and the *Reporter* are filled with interesting industry news – stock quotes, reviews, box-office figures, that kind of thing – and, of course, they are. But the more practised reader, the Industry denizen, reads the trades for one reason and one reason only: to find out how much other people are being paid. And as this leads almost inevitably to violently obscene language, reading the trades is something to be done in private." – from *Set Up, Joke, Set Up, Joke* by Rob Long (Bloomsbury, 2005), page 45.

"It's a well-known piece of Los Angeles lore that you can always spot the out-of-towners because they're the ones reading *Variety* and the *Hollywood Reporter* in public. Out-of-towners are under the impression that the trades carry all sorts of interesting information about showbusiness – stock quotes, reviews, box-office figures, etc – and that reading them in public will make them look like keen-eyed industry veterans. The only reason people actually employed in the entertainment business read the trades is to find out how much their competitors are being paid. That's why people read them in private – because discovering this information is nearly always accompanied by a string of expletives." – Toby Young, *Guardian*, 16 January 2007.


WHY THE GLUM FACE, JADE?
MY PUBLISHERS HAVE DROPPED 'MY AUTOBIOGRAPHY BY ME' DUE TO UNACCEPTABLE VIEWS
THE VIEW IS IT WON'T MAKE US LOTS OF MONEY!
HARPER COLLINS
JADE BOOK
THAT'S UNACCEPTABLE!

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, PT 94

Failing Better

What makes a good lead article in the *Guardian Saturday Review*? Should you have read Hegel? Does a nice picture help? **Zadie Smith** on literature's honourable legacy of failure.

1. The tale of Zadie

I want you to think of a young woman called Zadie. Zadie is on a familiar literary mission: she wants to write the perfect novel. Zadie has a lot going for her: she went to Cambridge, looks like an intellectual version of Beyonce and knows how keen arts editors are on Nabokov. Her book sells a quarter of a million copies. But Zadie has a strange feeling of untruth, of self-betrayal, what Barthes calls "the fundamental detachment of self-dom from the willed aesthetic". Instead, Zadie thinks she will try her hand at long newspaper essays recycling the interesting quotations she wrote down in her notebook during lectures.

2. Conceptualising the reified

That is the end of the tale of Zadie. Its purpose was to suggest that in a publishing industry characterised by hype and exaggeration, where a novel by a promising twenty-five year old can be hailed as a work of genius, the truth of how we judge literary success or failure is lost. What does it take, after all, to write well? As Barthelme, or was it Bananarama, so punctiliously elucidated, it ain't what you do, it's the way that you do it. Writers do not have perfectly or even superior knowledge about the quality of their own work. Even I have fallen into this delusionary snare, what Virginia Woolf called "probity's false and dissimulating arc". As Aristotle remarks somewhere, invincibility is the mail-coat of the iterative.

3. Time to drop a few OK names

I find mention of Kierkegaard often helps. Soren Kierkegaard, that is. Hegelian system-building is definitely in. Editors will also be reassured by the presence of Eliot and Woolf. I wanted to bring Lacan in here, but my notes from that lecture seem, alas, to have disappeared.

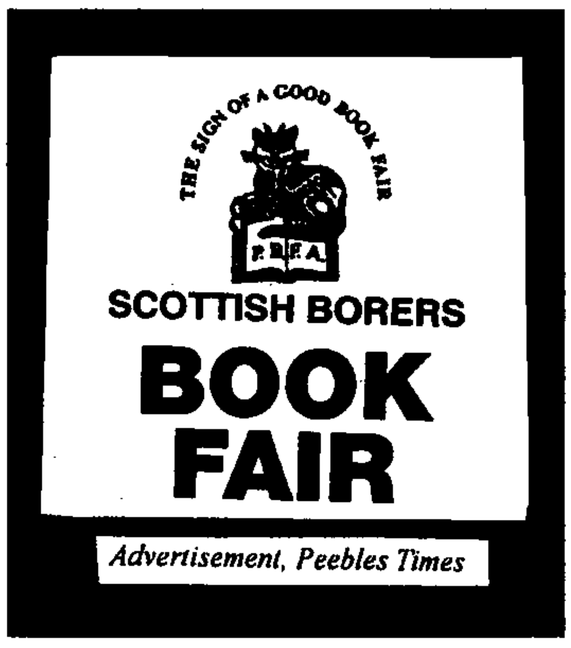
4. On the whole, mumps are better than measles...

Back to my simple point, which is that "self-hood", which we may define as "who you are", or Hegel's *selbs-ist*, has some part to play in literary success or failure. Naturally a dull seventy-year-old man will receive less attention in newspaper literary pages than a promotable thirty-something woman wearing a turban who has read Nabokov: this is what McLuhan defined as the "mercantilist codification of form". As the poet Hugh Carnaparthy Heigh observes in his poem, "Novels":

It's nice to be Ian McEwan
Martin Amis is still in the news
But you'll always see pictures of Zadie
On the front of the weekend reviews

5. Conclusions

Have you ever noticed how people are different from each other? They are though. Just look at them and you'll see I'm right. To live well, to write well, you must convince yourself of the inviolable reality of human quiddity. As for us writer-critics, we need to help the reader along, don't you know. Novels? Some of them work better than others. One man's meat is another man's poison. You can't detach literature from authorial personality. Wasn't Nabokov *stunning*, darlings? Going back to failure, it is literature in its imperfect aspect that I find most beautiful. That the *Guardian Saturday Review* can devote large parts of successive issues to an essay of quite stupefying banality in which the bleeding obvious is dressed up in fancy quotations reminds us of quite how frequently our subjectivity fails. As Simone de Beauvoir once observed, it is time to commission someone else for a change.



LIFE IMITATES ART

February 2006: Reeve & Way's "Off Your Trolley" strip in *Private Eye* carries joke about elderly patient who leaves bed only to return and find another patient has been put in it by staff.

January 2007: *Sun* carries news story about 68-year-old Pat Roberts, who left bed in Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital and returned to find another patient had been put in it by staff.

FILM 2007?

"SITTING through this cheesy new soft-porn Second World War resistance drama is like discovering a particularly humourless episode of *'Allo 'Allo* on satellite," complained Peter Bradshaw, reviewing Paul Verhoeven's film *Black Book* in the *Guardian*.

"It's a dire and overlong period movie that manages to display a good deal of prurience and misogyny... Every cliche is dragged out... It is crass, vulgar and flatulent," he complained. Directly adjacent to this was an advert for the film, which carried the tantalising endorsement "'Triumphant' – *Guardian*." How so?

The word was plucked from an interview with the director published the previous week. Rather than using it to describe the film (which he warned "might make some queasy"), Stuart Jeffries described Verhoeven's return to Holland after thirty years working in Hollywood as a "triumphant homecoming".

My wife and I don't use the familiar tu form of address when we talk to each other. We use the more formal vous. That's her idea: she's a bit old-fashioned that way. I think unconsciously she wants to create distance between us. All theoreticians of eroticism know that when there is no distance, there is no border; when there is no border there is no taboo; when there is no taboo there is no transgression; and where there is no transgression there is no desire.

French philosopher BERNARD-HENRI LEVY, *Sunday Times Magazine*

It was cricket as it might have been written by Kafka: a hideous punishment, as unjust as it was incomprehensible, inflicted on people who had earned the right to expect better things from life. It was like playing cricket against the Gestapo: cricket as a form of atrocity in which resistance is useless. It was cricket as torture, in which pain and hatred become distorted into a loving and grateful submission to the torturer.

SIMON BARNES on the Adelaide test match, *The Times*

Pseuds Corner

They've been as much a delight to me at 48 now as they have to my youngest daughter at eight. The first of the books that I actually read, ironically, was Peter Needham's delightful Latin translation of the first in the series, last Christmas. As I write, I anxiously await the UPS truck and the next instalment of Needham's brilliant handiwork.

EDWIN FIRMAGE on the Harry Potter books, letter to the *Guardian*

Thank God it's 2007. Last year was so roly-poly. Strangely, being cradled in the two Os, the 2 didn't seem sharp at all, and the 6 was totally bottom-heavy. Everything in 2006 seemed to be about waiting for it to happen, whatever the 'it' was. It was like "we'll just sit here in 2006 until 2007 comes along", as though 2007 was the real year.

'We have the 007 factor, the 2+2 = 9 thing, and best of all, the 2 and the 7 look like they're really good friends and could not care less about having a couple of Os trying to keep them apart. Plus the 2's just happy to be there instead of the more glamorous (in the numeric world) 3. Yes, I feel it in my bones: 2007 is going to be a dynamic year.

TRACEY EMIN greets the New Year, *Independent*

Fashion must be excessive. The woman who parades on the catwalk is the artistic vision of a creator. Let them express themselves freely. They don't exist to speak of reality, but to transcend it.

NATHALIE RYKIEL enters the skinny models debate, *Independent*

Bischoff/Weiss is pleased to present *Air Guitar and Two Teaspoons*, an exhibition of sculpture curated by Brooke Lynn McGowan and Charles Danby. Bringing into contrast, conversation and collision the work of several artists, the exhibition seeks to elide perception and derided narrative through its negotiation of that which is present even in as much as it is not there.

Press release

Pseuds Corporate

At Tesco we use a 'balanced scorecard' approach that we call the Steering Wheel. This management tool focuses our business on the delivery of our core purpose. It is the framework for all activity linking top-line strategy to personal objectives and it ensures that we balance our priorities effectively.

From Tesco's 'Community Plan'

CONTRIBUTORS: James Matthews, Martin Titchmarsh (and many others), Thomas Eaton, John Mitchell, Sean O'Keefe, Alix MacSweeney, Will Watt.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

PFI

Flaw in the Metrix

DEFENCE secretary Des Browne's announcement that Metrix was "preferred bidder" for a PFI deal under which forces' training will be privatised was, true to form, shrouded in secrecy amid mutterings that it had more to do with political expediency than military needs.

The £19bn deal will hand all professional training on anything from maintaining warships to driving tanks to the consortium of private companies (QinetiQ, EDS, Land Securities, Raytheon, Nord Anglia and others). And the early signs are of a fiasco in the offing. Under the deal, more than 80 percent of existing MoD training staff will eventually have to move across the country to Metrix's proposed base at St Athan in South Wales. Very few are willing to go, so Metrix could be left advertising in the local job centres for experts in, say, maintaining nuclear submarines, while handing out redundancy notices elsewhere.

Part of the deal, the so-called "package two" for security and logistics training, is already on hold while "a significant affordability gap" is addressed. Not that the main package one element is much more secure; shadow defence secretary Liam Fox was able to taunt Browne over his lukewarm assurance to the House that it was "broadly affordable". That's just what staff coping with existing overstretch need to hear.

The Metrix bid nonetheless appealed to the government. It spares MoD blushes by using the £100m "Red Dragon" super-hangar built by the MoD for fighter repair work shortly before, er, moving all fighter repair work out of Wales. And the welcome from many South Wales Labour MPs (who might otherwise have queried such a privatisation) said as much about its boost for their electoral chances as for the local economic boon they claimed to be celebrating. Most training is currently undertaken in Tory strongholds in Dorset, Hampshire and Staffordshire, where the losing bidder proposed to keep it.

Browne might have been expected to dispel suspicion that such factors clinched the deal for Metrix. But when Tory MP Mike Penning asked him to explain his decision, he mumbled that "coming to the House to announce a decision is, in some circumstances, quite restricting", before insisting that Metrix had offered the best value for money – and giving no evidence to back that up.

Lib Dem Lembit Opik wondered whether a non-PFI option was considered. Browne admitted it hadn't been as "the most significant advantage was that [PFI] allowed us the opportunity to make capital investment that, I candidly admit, we could not otherwise make". In fact the government could easily have made the necessary investment by the cheaper method of public borrowing and ownership, but that would show the debt on the government's books rather than keeping it "off balance sheet". Browne's answer showed that the government chose the best deal for its figures, not the armed forces – a political motive indeed.

Will to power

REFLECTING in Delhi on how Gandhi had inspired him, Gordon Brown mused with typical modesty: "That means especially having the strength of belief and will power to do what is difficult and right for the long term, even when there are easier short-term options on offer."

Really? Two days later, the Office of National Statistics revealed what the *Eye* has long

predicted: that the Chancellor's private finance initiative would be needed to save him from breaching his "sustainable investment rule", under which government debt must not exceed 40 percent of gross domestic product.

The ONS disclosed that debt rose to 38.1 percent in December. But there are £35bn worth of liabilities from PFI contracts for hospitals, schools and defence contracts currently sitting "off-balance sheet", according to Treasury and ONS figures. If these had been funded by public borrowing, around 2.5 percent would have been added to the debt ratio. One of Gordon's golden rules would have been smashed and he might even have faced more questions about the nation's finances than he did about Jade v. Shilpa.

The private finance initiative that the Chancellor has so assiduously pursued for 10 years has thus achieved its purpose: protecting his economic credentials. The price, though, is a ruinous scheme that hits public services from health to the armed forces and will wreak more havoc in decades to come.

In the face of mounting evidence against PFI, Brown has indeed shown Gandhi-like reserves of belief and will power – to follow his short-term interests regardless of the long-term damage.

Magic fiddle

REVELATIONS in the last *Eye* of corruption investigations involving consultants Mott MacDonald could prove particularly embarrassing for Brown.

PFI projects are only given the go-ahead after being judged better value for money than the public sector alternative. In making the comparison a fiddle factor called the "optimism bias" artificially increases the cost of the public sector alternative. (On the deal to re-furbish the MoD headquarters, for example, it accounted for most of the £103m adjustment that magically made the PFI deal £1m cheaper).

A footnote to the Treasury "Green Book" guidelines under which this adjustment is made says it comes from a study entitled "Review of Large Public Procurement in UK" – but makes no mention of who wrote it. A little research reveals the authors to be none other than Mott MacDonald. By an odd coincidence, they have gone on to earn millions from PFI consultancy work.

Falling down the Steps

MORE evidence of the true cost of PFI comes from HM Revenue and Customs, where figures unearthed by the *Eye* show the sale-and-lease contract on its buildings will set taxpayers back by £4.5bn – three times the £1.5bn claimed.

Under the STEPS deal, the taxman's buildings were sold in 2001 to, um, a tax haven company, Mapeley Steps Ltd, and rented back. Three years ago the National Audit Office accepted assurances that the 20-year contract would cost £3.4bn in total at 2001 prices, which, once the Treasury's spurious "discounting" process had been applied, shrunk dramatically to £1.5bn – just below the "public sector alternative" costing £1.8bn.

Now HMRC confirms that the deal will come to £3.6bn. And that's before inflation, which will add another billion or so. As the alternative of keeping the buildings in the public sector was officially put at £1.8bn before inflation, the disastrous STEPS deal has doubled the cost of running the country's tax offices while the private offshore company owning them, Mapeley, coins it in tax-free (*Eyes passim*). Great work.

HMRC's latest accounts show that last year the contract cost £226m, taking the total in just five years to £1.1bn. A significant reduction is required if the £3.6bn plus inflation isn't to be overshot; hence the target announced before Christmas of shaving £30m off "estates" costs. These will be achieved by shoving more staff into call centres and slashing 25,000 jobs, thousands of which involve stemming multi-billion pound tax dodging losses that threaten the government's ability to pay mounting bills for ... PFI contracts like STEPS!

PRISON BRUTALITY

Cover-up at the Scrubs

SIX of the senior staff in charge as Wormwood Scrubs prison descended into a hell-hole where inmates were beaten and abused are still working for the National Offender Management Service. Only one of the management team in place at the jail during its nine years of brutality ever faced formal investigation into their role.

The lack of accountability for the events at the west London jail was revealed in answers to parliamentary questions from Lord Ramsbotham, the former chief inspector of prisons. In fact Jim Perris, governor of the jail for most of the time it was out of control, went on to become an area manager responsible for the Scrubs and other prisons.

Ramsbotham tabled a series of questions in the Lords at the end of last year, following the release of four of six internal Home Office reports into events at the jail between 1992 and 2001. They revealed widespread abuse involving dozens of staff, drinking on the job, destruction and falsifying of records and suggestions that allegations of abuse were brought to the attention of management but that little was done.

One of the reports concluded the brutality at the jail "often approximated to torture, and was of greater gravity than in any British prison, at least over the past 40 years". It said: "Every prison has its maverick officers. Every governor over time will have investigated allegations of assault by staff... [but] there has never before been such a concentration of sustained malpractice as illustrated in this review."

The Home Office paid out more than £1.8m in compensation over claims for assault and brutality, including rape and sexual assault with implements. Events at the Scrubs triggered one of the largest-ever criminal investigations into staff activities at any English jail. Yet the Home Office has consistently refused any public scrutiny of what went on.

Following *Eye* 1174's report on the Scrubs, the author of one of the many internal inquiries at the jail, Peter Quinn, a former prison governor, wrote to the *Eye* to say that while he had made submissions on the accountability of those at the then prison service headquarters, there were also others, such as medical staff, "who consistently failed to notice injuries or process prisoner complaints".

Adding his voice to demands for a public inquiry, he wrote that the 1994 death by hanging of prisoner John Boyle in the jail's segregation block was never properly investigated by the prison service. Boyle had injuries that were not consistent with a suicide hanging and an inquest jury returned an open verdict. "This became even more sinister in the context of those whose cases I reviewed, who had been threatened that they would be hanged by staff who said they had got away with it before."

But it is clear ministers are trying to draw a line under the scandal. "Lessons have been learned, extensive investigations have taken place and Wormwood Scrubs has changed significantly for the better," said Home Office minister Baroness Scotland.

Except that it won't go away so easily – as the European Court of Human Rights is yet to rule on the lawfulness of the failure to hold a public inquiry. Which Home Secretary will be around to pick up the pieces is anyone's guess.

FINANCIAL ADVICE

Fine, fine...

TREASURY minister Ed Balls launched a "taskforce" on 15 January to design a Financial Advice Service so that even the lowest paid can get "quick, easy and simple access to good quality financial advice". Scouting round for a suitable guiding light he selected one Otto Thoresen, chief executive of AEGON UK. So what is Thoresen's background in this area?

A subsidiary of AEGON UK, Guardian Assurance, was fined £750,000 this time last year by the Financial Services Authority for "serious systemic flaws" in its handling of mortgage endowment complaints. Far from giving good quality advice, the AEGON firm told customers complaining about endowments to sling their hook – after thousands had received bad advice persuading them to buy poor quality endowments from the company in the first place. *Which?* slammed the fine as too low and described the firm's behaviour as "breathtaking". Thoreson is also part of the AEGON management board set up to "oversee AEGON's worldwide businesses". But last summer AEGON in Hungary was fined around £180,000 for misleading pension investors with brochures falsely claiming the company was better value than all its competitors. AEGON had previously been fined £50,000 in Hungary for repeated violations of rules.

Thoreson was "delighted" by Balls' invitation – and well he might be. The financial industry's enthusiasm for "money literacy" programmes mainly reflects their use as protection against costly mis-selling claims: punters who buy ropy products after getting officially sanctioned advice are hardly likely to get far with a compensation claim.

Meanwhile thrifty Balls and the pensions minister James Purnell are also keen: a financial advice programme might persuade the low paid to save some of their small salaries for retirement, and so bring down the social security bill.

PROPERTY

Ilford gotten gains

ILFORD'S long-promised sky-scraper Pioneer Point, which remains a boarded-up wasteland almost a year after ground-breaking, could soon be providing more work for local tax inspectors than builders, according to documents seen by the *Eye*.

The £100m tower is due to be constructed by the Empire Property Group, under the control of chairman Hayden Chittell and side-kick Tom O'Donnell, on the site of the old Pioneer Market. Until two years ago the land was owned by the stallholders, who had to be persuaded from their strong negotiating position to give up the market and make way for the twin tower development.

Empire, whose chief executive officer O'Donnell is no stranger to large wads of cash (see *Eye* 1171), achieved this through the tried and tested method of doling out well-stuffed brown envelopes. As O'Donnell told a business associate shortly afterwards: "If you've ever tried to buy a Christmas tree on Christmas Eve from a market trader you know how they haggle." So 64 traders were given brown paper bags. It's not known how much cash was spread around, nor quite where it came from, but the last trader to be paid off evidently drove a hard bargain. "She walked out the door with 40 grand in pound notes on the final morning," complained O'Donnell. "Last bird to leave. She would not fucking leave". Of course everyone involved may well have declared this to HM Revenue & Customs, in which case all will be well. And if Empire make tens of millions of pounds in profits, HM Revenue & Customs will no doubt get their share. Unless O'Donnell has come up with a legal tax avoidance structure for the deal which, in his own words, would be "totally tax-free – it would fuck the taxman".

LADY IN THE LAKE

A criminal piece of television

CALLING a documentary "Real Crime", might suggest it relies on real, incontrovertible facts. Sadly not. ITV's *Real Crime: The Lady in the Lake* purported to be an examination of the evidence that led to the conviction of Gordon Park (pictured) for the murder of his wife Carol, whose well-wrapped body was found at the bottom of Lake Coniston in August 1997 – 21 years after she disappeared.

Park was convicted in January 2005 on the most dubious of evidence (*Eye* 1150). The couple's two children are now at the forefront of a campaign to prove his innocence. Not that you would have learned that from this programme.

"One can only imagine the pain of being hit with an ice-axe," the narrator intoned. Except there was no evidence that Carol Park had been murdered with an ice-axe. In fact, a pathologist told the trial, it was all but impossible to give any specific cause of death, let alone identify a murder weapon.

Friends of Carol's intimated that Gordon had been violent towards her. Yet Carol had told her GP, not long before she disappeared, that her husband had never used nor threatened violence. The trial judge, Mr Justice McCombe, also referred to Park's "non-violent disposition".

Another interviewee claimed that Carol "could do nothing socially on her own". Again, an odd conclusion about a woman who had a number of lovers and once walked out on her family to set up home with a former police officer on the other side of the country.

Then there was the clothing found, the programme told us, "close to the body". The senior investigating officer, DCI Keith Churchman, said: "For me, the clothing was Carol's and it went down with her. Perhaps it had become involved in the murder, maybe it got spattered with blood, or had been used to clean up the blood, who knows?"

Who knows, indeed? The clothing was found more than 70 metres away. There was nothing linking it to Carol; and no evidence of Carol's blood in Park's house. The prosecution attempted to link the clothing to Park by saying a rock found on the bottom of the lake, with the clothing, and possibly used to weigh it down, corresponded closely to the stones in Park's garden wall.

When shown the rock, the police diver said to have found it fainted. When he recovered he told the court he hadn't noticed a rock on the dive and he hadn't brought one up. A geologist called by the defence said that, far from being in the water 21 years, there was no evidence that it had ever been in water at all. Such curiosities did not trouble the documentary makers.

The programme's most disingenuous section was the prison "grass" evidence. While steadfastly maintaining his innocence to everyone, Park was said to have made a "cell-confession" to his fellow inmate Glen Banks when he was held on remand for two weeks in 1997. Banks had severe learning difficulties and was said to be in the lowest two per cent of the population in terms of mental ability. Yet, claimed DCI Churchman in the programme, this "actually strengthened his evidence … because the way his learning difficulties were, it meant he couldn't make things up. You could give him a story to remember, and he could remember it, so the medical experts were saying, 'anything he tends to say is the truth'."

Except, as experts told the court at the time, Banks had an "elevated risk of suggestibility" -- borne out by the fact that Banks had told the court that Park had gone to Blackpool with his wife to celebrate their wedding anniversary, and had killed her on a boat there and dumped her body – which didn't remotely fit the facts of the case.

Finally, what about the Parks' children? The programme said Carol had three. In fact she had two children with Gordon. She had also adopted her sister Christine's child after Christine was murdered by her boyfriend John Rapson. Rapson had been released from prison and was living in a hostel at time Carol disappeared.

Meanwhile the couple's children, Jeremy and Rachael, continue to fight to get their father's conviction overturned.

MARINE POLLUTION

Setting course for disaster

BACK in 2005 the *Eye* warned that Falmouth Harbour Commissioners' plan to allow ship-to-ship transfers of Russian crude oil in Falmouth Bay was a disaster waiting to happen.

Environmentalists were alarmed, we said, at the prospect of a major oil spill fact in the Fal and Helford special area of marine conservation (SAC), an area of outstanding natural beauty and one of Cornwall's premier tourist destinations.

Last week's spillage of more than 200 tonnes of fuel oil from the grounded container ship *Napoli* along the coast in Lyme Bay and the battle to prevent a further 3,600 tonnes escaping and devastating the marine environment along the "Jurassic Coast" was a warning of the potential for a disaster on a much greater scale in an equally delicate environment if the Falmouth commissioners' crazed plan goes ahead.

Russian oil can only come out of the Baltic in small tankers, as its waters are so shallow. Once in open waters the cargoes of several small tankers can be combined in a single super-tanker for transportation further afield.

In *Eye* 1134 we wrote: "Previously such operations took place in Lyme Bay, off the Devon and Dorset coast [site of the *Napoli* incident], but ceased when both county councils acknowledged that there were huge environmental and financial risks and negligible economic gain… The EU is keen to see such transfer operations moved well away from sensitive inshore waters and is bringing in new legislation to achieve this. But it will not apply to areas under the jurisdiction of local harbour authorities such as Falmouth, which provide an effectual loophole for ship-to-ship transfers to continue close to shore.

"Should a big spill occur the consequences would be devastating for the tourist industry, for the fishermen of Falmouth and other ports, and for marine life."

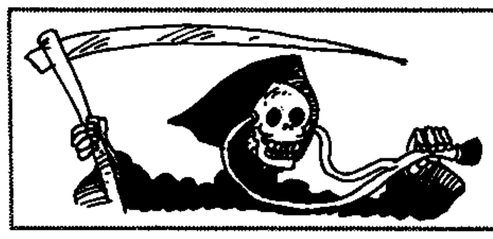
Despite the fact that the oil tankers and passenger liners planned for Falmouth will dwarf the *Napoli*, the FHCs remain gung-ho as ever, not least as £500,000 funding for a rubber-stamp environmental impact assessment (EIA) has been guaranteed by the South West of England Regional Development Agency and the Objective One Partnership for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Until recently there was little likelihood that funding would be found for the EIA, effectively ensuring that the bay, harbour and seabed would remain safe from ruination.

On hearing the news that the assessment will go-ahead Falmouth harbour commissioner Captain Mark Sansom (*Eyes passim*) could scarcely contain himself and was said to be "jubilant", according to the local paper, the *Falmouth Packet*.

Exactly how big an environmental disaster has to be before FHC reconsider their plans is far from clear. Not even the precedent of the *Torrey Canyon*, wrecked off the Scillies in 1967 and spilling 31 million gallons of oil into the sea between England and France, killing most of the marine life it touched along the shores of Devon, Cornwall and Normandy, seems sufficient to deter the commissioners.

In the Back Health Special overleaf ➤



HEALTH SPECIAL

MEDICINE BALLS

Target practice

THERE ARE few sights less edifying in the NHS than Patricia Hewitt's brass neck, and it reached goitrous proportions with her latest attack on "greedy, lazy" GPs. By committing the heinous crime of hitting all their targets and delivering precisely what their government-negotiated contract asked of them, they are guilty of bankrupting the NHS. Right.

Contrast this with the contracts offered to private companies to take over NHS diagnostics and surgery. These were guaranteed (i.e. paid whether patients were seen or not), paid above the going rate and allowed the cherry-picking of easy cases while leaving the NHS to mop up any cock ups or act as a sink for patients too sick to turn a profit. Despite all these advantages, many companies have failed to treat their target volume of patients.

Doctors have also voiced concerns about the quality of care provided in independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs). This was dismissed by the government as protectionist scare mongering but on the day Hewitt went for the GPs' jugular, the Healthcare Commission announced that the data on the clinical quality of ISTCs was "incomplete and of extremely poor quality". So what's the story? GPs fulfilling their contracts and collecting their payments, or expensive, unfair, underperforming, unaudited and potentially dangerous private treatment centres?

The healthy sums paid to GP partners were entirely predictable. Dangle a big carrot in front of intelligent, ambitious small businesses and it tends to get eaten. Unlike ISTCs, GPs have now contributed a huge amount of data to be entered into the NHS IT programme, should it ever deliver on its (under-performing, hugely overspent) contract. What's harder to assess is whether the GP contract will radically improve patient care and provide value for money. There are early signs that diabetic care is improving, and perhaps the care for patients with heart disease and stroke, but it's hard to prove because there was very little comparative data prior to the contract.[1]

Removing out-of-hours obligations from GPs and carving general practice up into targets is merely a way of introducing privatisation. The blame heaped on GPs for doing what was asked of them will further fuel the argument for more competition. Companies who have saturated the healthcare market in their own countries are using the NHS as a gateway to Europe, waved in by "new" Labour. The government recently published its NHS Operating Framework[2], which makes an interesting comparison to the 10 core principles that they set out in the 2000 NHS Plan. Seven years ago, they pledged that "public funds for healthcare will be devoted solely to NHS patients". This pledge has no been quietly shelved, as public funds for healthcare are increasingly devoted to the shareholders of private companies.

The latest game is to privatise outpatients by littering the country with Capture Assess Treat and Support (CATS) centres. Patients referred to hospital will be caught in Netcare's net whether they chose to or not. White elephant PFI-indebted hospitals won't be able to compete and will try to canabilise surrounding hospitals, which are already running over capacity. And demand from an ageing population will rise year on year. The latest delusion is that transferring hospital services to GPs with special interests is cheaper (it isn't) and will reduce demand. The more you train GPs, the more they realise what is possible and the more they refer to hospital. The NHS is heading for meltdown and one again, it'll all be the GPs' fault.

M.D.

[1] www.gpcontract.co.uk
[2] http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/14/11/95/04141195.pdf

COMMUNITY NURSES

Stressed out

NHS cutbacks in health visiting and community nursing (*Eyes passim*) are placing an intolerable workload on the dedicated nurses who keep providing the service – as shown by a case heard in the High Court in December.

Health visitor Tina Hiles, who mainly worked with new mothers, advising them on correct care of babies, suffered a psychiatric breakdown after cutbacks left her dealing with a huge caseload. When one of the already stretched small team of three nurses left and was not replaced, Mrs Hiles tried to alert her bosses at South Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust to the work overload by letter, but nothing was done. At one point she returned from holiday to find so much work awaiting her that she suffered a migraine and lost sight in one eye due to the stress.

Judge Robert Moxon-Browne awarded Mrs Hiles £64,000 in compensation, saying that the breakdown was "foreseen and could have been prevented by the exercise of reasonable care".

● There's no "reasonable care" going on in the London borough of Brent, however, where primary care services are making £14m cuts by the end of this financial year. Clinics, day centres and walk-in centres are to be closed, 15 district nurses will go and children's health services are to be cut. Grants supporting volunteer-run bereavement counselling, carers groups and the Citizen's Advice Bureau GP surgery outreach project are all being cut.

The local council is outraged, as many of the mental health and children's services are run jointly with social services, and it has told the Department of Health that it will use "every legal remedy" to make the NHS fulfil its partnership agreements, but the Trust is told it must balance its £53m debt. Yet Patricia Hewitt keeps insisting that hospital closures are OK because care can be better provided "in the community".

MENTAL HEALTH

Children cast adrift

WHILE Ruth Kelly's decision to buy a better education for her dyslexic child placed the government's poor provision for children with special educational needs under the spotlight, a review of the government's equally poor provision for children with mental health problems passed almost unnoticed.

A report by the Children's Commissioner, Professor Sir Albert Aynsley-Green, found that vulnerable young people with mental health problems were being forced onto sometimes dangerous adult wards because of a shortage of beds.

The report recorded the experiences of 16 young people admitted to adult psychiatric wards in the last 18 months. Many felt unsafe after being subjected to verbal, physical and sexual harassment from other patients. Others described how they were able to harm themselves and take drugs and alcohol. They were shunted between facilities with little warning or explanation. One was detained in a police cell for more than 12 hours because of confusion over where to place him.

The Commissioner demanded an end to the inappropriate use of adult wards for children and called for better alternatives, such as "high quality responsive community teams". Except, as the *Eye* reports today, community mental health teams are at the forefront of cuts as health trusts wrestle with mounting debts.

DR DAVID SOUTHALL

Patient battle

A SICK baby who was under the care of consultant paediatrician Dr David Southall at the time of his 1980s breathing experiments – which included reducing oxygen supplies and increasing carbon dioxide – is questioning the medical authority under which he worked.

Lawrence Alexander, now 20, is one of hundreds of children on whom Southall kept "special case files" – now part of General Medical Council proceedings against him (*Eye* 1175). Lawrence suffered life-threatening breathing difficulties, including near-misses of cot death when he stopped breathing. He was referred to Southall at the Royal Brompton Hospital in London in 1987.

Having now obtained most of his records, Lawrence discovered that he had been enrolled in a "sleep study" – though 15 pages which might have described what went on are missing. The records also show he suffered gastro-oesophageal reflux, with other indications of the severe allergies that were diagnosed much later. Yet Southall was instrumental in commencing wardship proceedings suggesting that there was nothing wrong with Lawrence and that his parents were harming their child. Fortunately the proceedings were thrown out after expert medical evidence showed Lawrence had indeed suffered near-miss cot death, and psychiatric reports showed no evidence of child abuse.

Lawrence has discovered that Southall was a senior lecturer at the Brompton at the time and had honorary consultancy status for "clinical monitoring". A document from the Brompton, written in 1995, says that its medical advisory committee considered he did not have the "appropriate expertise" for full consultant status and his appointment in "paediatric clinical monitoring" should *not* entail clinical responsibility for patients.

Southall told the GMC hearing last month that between 1986 and 1988, he was an honorary consultant in "paediatric clinical physiology", and it was only because he was not a full-time paediatrician that patients – including Lawrence – were admitted under the care of another consultant.

The *Eye* asked Dr Southall to explain the discrepancy. We also asked when he became clinically qualified to take responsibility for patients, but he declined to comment. "I think he would have called you by now if he intended to respond," said his assistant at the University Hospital of North Staffordshire, where Southall is a consultant paediatrician (although not permitted to engage in child protection work).

Lawrence's mother, Janet Alexander, said Southall's behaviour had worried her from the start: "In fact it was because we became suspicious that Southall was just simply using Lawrence as a guinea pig that we told him enough was enough and said we were going to take Lawrence home. The next day instead of meeting doctors to discuss Lawrence's care and prognosis, we found we were at a care case conference with social workers and Southall. It was terrifying."

Southall's controversial experiments, as John Hemming MP told the Commons last month, included depriving babies of oxygen by giving them an air mix of "only 15 percent oxygen rather than the normal 21 percent, and then giving them too much carbon dioxide". The MP wants an inquiry and the release of the children's secret files.

Southall was first found guilty of serious professional misconduct by the GMC in 2004 after he wrongly accused the husband of solicitor Sally Clark of murdering their two children. He was banned from engaging in child protection work for three years. The current GMC charges against him centre on the children's medical records and secret files – including Lawrence's.

The Alexander family's allegations that Southall had embarked on research without consent and that it was "contrary to the provisions of good medical practice" were thrown out by the GMC at an earlier stage. Lawrence hopes that further disclosure may yet make the GMC review the charges, before the hearing resumes next November.

In the City

THE Dear Leader and his legal poodle, the attorney-general Lord Goldsmith, have wasted the thick end of close to £2m of public money by caving in to Saudi blackmail and dropping the BAE Systems corruption inquiry. This figure does not include central costs, such as the time that Serious Farce Office lawyers and investigators have spent on the case since 2003.

The cost to the taxpayer emerged as a result of a Freedom of Information request by an *Eye* reader. At the end of November – some two weeks before Goldsmith, on Tony Blair's instructions, suddenly discovered there was no case – the SFO disclosed that it had spent £1,858,043 on the Saudi investigation. This included some costs relating to other BAE bribes investigations, but mainly related to the major Saudi inquiry, which was dropped to save corrupt Saudi faces and the £10bn Eurofighter contract jobs.

Expenditure by the SFO specifically on the South Africa, Tanzania, Romania, Czech and Chilean inquiries was put at a mere £1,641 – an indication of how much effort went into the Saudi probe in comparison with the other allegations of BAE commissions/kickbacks which now remain to justify the investigation. For its part, the overruled SFO thought that, as is normal practice, no decision could be made as to whether charges could be brought until inquiries were completed, and, in particular, the secrets of the Saudi-linked Swiss bank accounts revealed.

The more Goldsmith seeks to explain his craven decision, the more the wheels come off his "wider public interest" and "national security" excuses. His officials attempted two weeks ago to persuade a sceptical OECD anti-bribery working group that Britain had not breached the convention banning corruption by dropping the case for economic/political reasons. Their efforts were not helped by an inability to produce any evidence that the security services believed the case would cause "serious damage" to intelligence from the Saudis on al-Qaeda. Naturally the British ambassador reported how the Saudi royals were upset. But then his job is to keep the corrupt despots sweet.

Nobody at the OECD meeting was convinced. Certainly not the Americans, who take overseas corporate bribery seriously even when it involves Uncle Sam's allies. The OECD working group expressed "serious concerns" over the decision and will return to the issue in March.

Meanwhile, it is worth remembering every time BAE repeats its mantra that it did nothing wrong and does not pay bribes that in 2001, it was found to have been among defence contractors who paid some £100m to a Qatari foreign minister. BAE paid at least £7m into trust company accounts controlled by Sheikh Hamad al-Thani after a consortium it headed was given a £500m arms contract.

The Jersey authorities investigated after the accounts were frozen in 2000. *Eye* readers will also recall that, two years later, embarrassing police investigations were once again halted – in part after pressure from the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence who were keen not to embarrass a good friend and customer of the West. But the Jersey authorities did extract from al-Thani a payment of £6m to cover the cost of their investigations, and in return for unfreezing his accounts.

Perhaps the Dear Leader or his poodle would like to take the cap round to the Saudi Embassy and ask Prince Sultan and his family for a £2m donation to cover the costs of keeping their Swiss bank accounts safe? Like al-Thani, they would no doubt consider it cheap at the price.

TONY BLAIR was put on the spot last week by Barry Sheerman, MP for Huddersfield and a senior Labour backbencher, over the activities of private equity groups that now employ more than three million British workers. Sheerman did not go so far as to call them "locusts", as one German politico did, but he was not complimentary. They were "in pursuit of a quick buck", and cut back on investment and the skills of workers; "they asset strip rapidly… that is a worrying situation".

"Does he share my concern," Sheerman asked the Prime Minister, "and can he do something about it?"

As ever when dealing with the seriously rich (whose lifestyle he can only enjoy on a freebie or the taxpayers' tab), Blair was in no rush to join the horny-handed sons of toil in giving them a kick.

"Although I am sure that there are situations of abuse to which my Hon Friend draws attention, I think that private equity companies in this country have provided a valuable basis of investment in British industry," he declared, before waffling on about how Labour had provided "excellent protection for our workforce".

Such views are unlikely to satisfy the unions or their members at companies such as Birds Eye, gobbled up last year by Permira, which also owns the AA, casino group Gala Coral and shop chain New Look. Six hundred jobs are to go when Captain Birds Eye's Hull factory is closed later this year and the work moved to – Germany. No doubt Tony's devotee Alan Johnson, the education minister and local MP, is somewhat less impressed by the "excellent protection" Labour has provided to Permira's workforce in Hull.

But the PM's words of support may make it easier for him to move into that lucrative private equity world – with all the executive jet travel, five-star hotels and fat consultancy fees it offers – once he leaves Downing Street.

There have been suggestions at Westminster that private equity could be a route the Dear Leader takes to line his post-politics retirement, along with the Murdoch book deal and Clinton-style US speech circuit.

The word is that discreet approaches have been arriving at Number 10 since last autumn from those who figure the Blair name still has marquee value and can open doors abroad, if not at home. And private equity, rather than a multinational such as BP (aka Blair Petroleum), could offer a lot more: no transparency as to how much he is paid for starters – in keeping with the rest of the "locusts"; no public annual meetings, just cosy chats with institutional or millionaire shareholders and agreeable gatherings of advisory boards in luxury locations.

None other than the Tory leader Blair defeated, Sir John Major – remember him? – has already taken the private equity pound in his usual quiet way. In 2001, Major signed up with the US Carlyle Group as its European chairman/door opener. He stepped down in 2004. What Carlyle received or expected remains a mystery.

But even a tarnished Tony is a much bigger catch, whether or not his market value has fallen because of Iraq and the honours scandal. His old friend and Labour peer Lord Clive Hollick can be found at another US private equity group – Kohlberg Kravis Roberts.

However, while they pay bigger bucks and offer a global role, Blair might find a homegrown "locust", such as Damon Buffini, managing partner of Permira, more attractive. Buffini is black, rich and British, so a good advertisement for New Labour even though he has no Labour track record. Like another Blair favourite, Tesco boss Terry Leahy, Buffini is a council-house-to-caviar success story.

And as is proved by Sheerman's Commons question and the demonstrations that evening outside a London charity dinner – staged by the buy-out brigade to show they really care about other people – private equity is in serious need of some good PR.

On both sides of the Atlantic, private equity groups feel under threat. In Washington they have done the traditional – formed a lobbying group. In Britain they have been pushing their good deeds. Carlyle and KKR, as well as Blackstone and Bain Capital, have joined their UK rivals in forming a trade group to counter their asset-stripping rep.

What greater coup than to have Tony Blair to argue their case? Money would be no object, so they would be speaking Tony and Cherie's language.

THE much-awaited decision last week by the High Court in the case of former Morgan Crucible chief executive Ian Norris – that price-fixing was a criminal offence prior to the Enterprise Act 2002 – will have concentrated the minds of corporate defendants in the SFO's NHS generic drugs prosecution. Although a final ruling will be forthcoming in the Norris case from the Law Lords, the SFO will now press ahead with its case: the next court hearing is due in April. A number of procedural points are yet to be decided, but the trial is scheduled to start next year.

Until now, the five corporate defendants could take comfort from the hope that the SFO might be derailed by a favourable ruling in Norris. But the

THE DIRECTORS
DREDGE & RIGG
REJOICE! I EARN A HUNDRED TIMES WHAT WE PAY OUR STAFF
ER, THAT'S NOT A TAD, ER, EXCESSIVE, IS IT SIR J?
EXCESSIVE? THAT'S THE POLITICS OF ENVY!
I'M STILL ON LESS THAN THAT GREEDY PIG OVER AT GLOBOCORP!
235.

Stock Horror

by 'Bruin'

More of that Murdoch magic

Winners and losers at BSkyB since Rupert put his son James in charge 3 years ago

...Shareholders	+ £8.9m ...James Murdoch
– £2 billion	

three multinationals, Teva, Merck and Ranbaxy, will perhaps feel it is time to consider the consequences of pressing on to a trial and continuing to support present and former executives who are defendants. All the defendants deny the charges of conspiracy to defraud.

This factor may not be unrelated to the news last November that another UK defendant, Goldshield, was considering a possible buy-out approach from its chief executive, Ajit Patel, one of the nine individual defendants in the NHS price-fixing case. Goldshield, like the SFO, intervened in the Norris case as an interested party.

The SFO would probably have pressed on even if the High Court had ruled for Norris in his bid to avoid extradition to the United States. Since it raided the drug companies in 2002, the SFO has been convinced it would win. Others say a trial could still involve a big risk.

SFO insiders play down the extent to which Lord Goldsmith had to pressure then-SFO director Ros Wright to take the case after it was first raised by the NHS counter-fraud unit in 2000. They say Wright was indeed reluctant, but merely wanted assurances, first that there was a criminal case, and second that there would be financial backing for the huge cost. Both decisions involved discussions with Goldsmith.

Goldsmith was also involved in pressing for the case to go ahead after news of it leaked in late 2001. There was an exaggerated fear that vital documents would be destroyed or disappear. In the event, four months later SFO raids collected more than three million – enough to bring the prosecution last April.

Another issue for the companies is the fines now faced by price-fixing cartels. Last week, Siemens was hit with a record 400m euros (£268m) penalty by the European Commission for heading a switchgear cartel. In November, synthetic rubber groups including Shell were fined a total of £348m. The biggest collective punishment is still the £529m handed out to a vitamins price-fixing cartel in 2001.

Doubtless all the defendants will also be factoring in the heavy sentences that tend to be handed down to those who are found guilty of ripping off the beloved NHS: four years for a dentist who over-charged by £450,000; 18 months for a practice manager who stole £37,500 – both last December. The big figure at stake in the SFO case is at least £150m.

The three multinationals have already settled similar civil claims brought by the NHS for a total of around £30m, but without any admission of wrongdoing to protect their and their executives' position in the criminal case. The issue now will be whether they continue to roll the dice waiting on a possible Norris victory in the Lords, or look to be the first through the SFO door to cut the best deal.

Either way it is a game of high stakes. The NHS investigation is probably already the most expensive the SFO has ever launched – over £14m at the last count, and some say it could end up costing more than £20m.

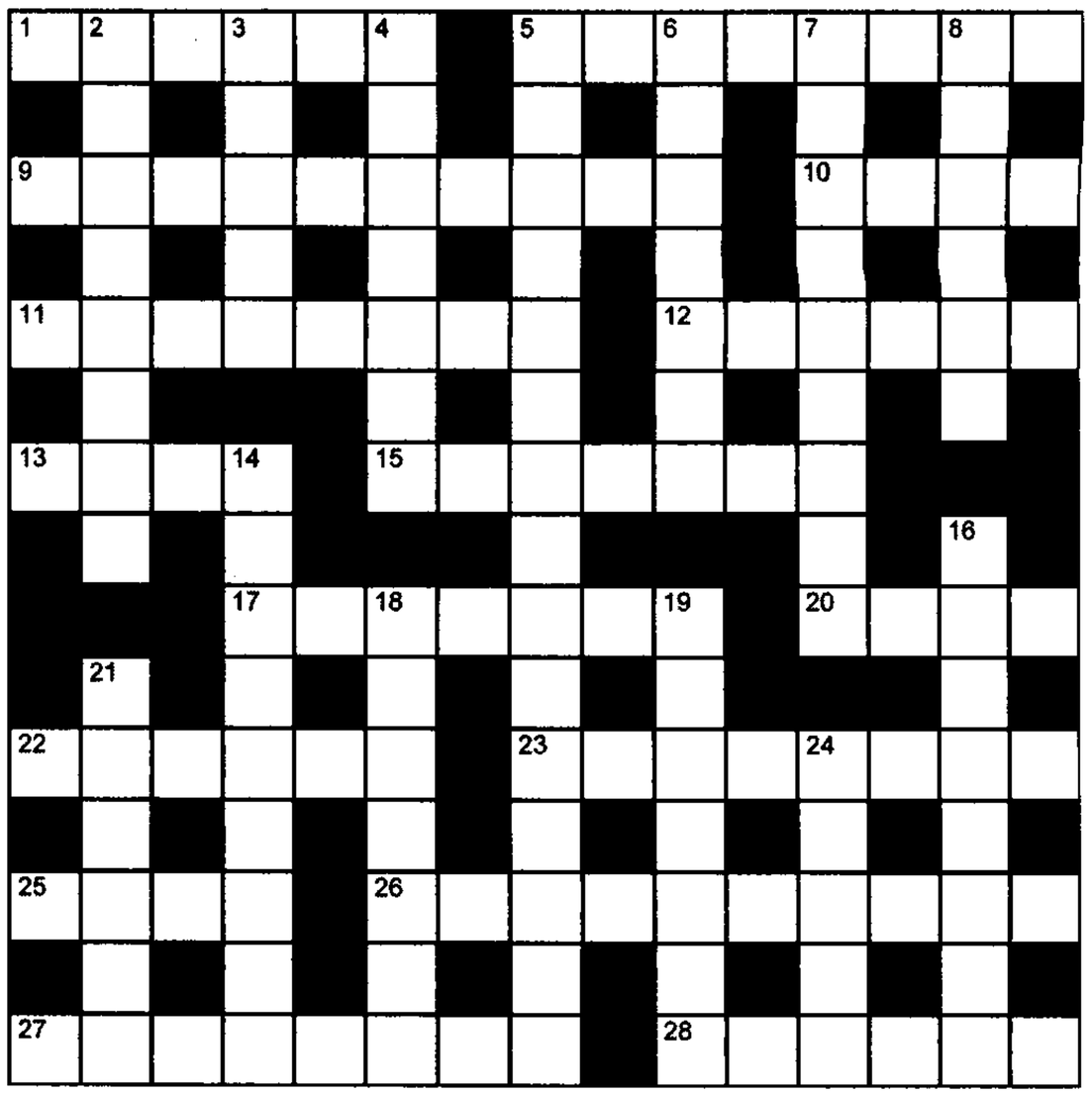
'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 332

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 9 February 2006

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

1 To be a luvvie and drink is a pain in the arse (4,2)
5 Drink breaks as announced by piss-artist? (8)
9 Is local corruption and head from Monroe about the crux of John Kennedy's problem? (10)
10 Way of showing online amusement at Labour's chief slouch (4)
11 Flapping old towel and rolling in it (4-2-2)
12 Fashion again is about taking a drug (6)
13/20ac. Peter, in shady parlance, needs arse, as preferred by parliamentary candidate (4,4)
15 The best possible pot, sadly one not forthcoming (7)
17 Cheap-to-make radio programme, producing *Peg Gobbles Hard One* (5-2)
20 See 13ac.
22 Peacekeepers to be joined by Crouch? Relax! (6)
23 Kiss very big copper on behind (8)
25 Fruity thing, unattractive, given 'oral' treatment (4)
26 Mean – pissed on poor dears (5-5)
27 Patriotic figure shows way to get stuffed outside England's capital (2,6)
28 Start of David Steel's downfall? Having no senior (6)

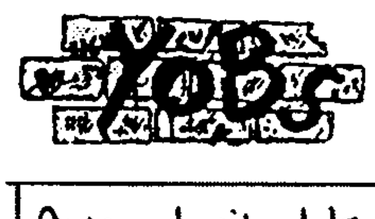
DOWN

2 "Dead end" suitably clued as "Leader of Conservatives" (3-2-3)
3 Seat that's been evacuated (5)
4 Leaders of protest rubbish old campaigning rock singer for the public good, in short (3,4)
5 That accidental admission re. Iraq by Blair? – (i.e. reason for failing to administer a proper licking) (4,2,3,6)
6 Honk rap that's commonplace (7)
7 Awkward, having only members that oppose (3,6)
8 Rub up Victoria round tops of legs (inside) (6)
14 One of many Nixon had to take out? (9)
16 Indiscreet, tense? Don't make so much of a performance of it! (8)
18 Wrinkly Rod's let out (7)
19 After snog, truss is smart wear (7)
21 Kay twiddled thing for board member (6)
24 Flashy Lulu ridiculed somewhat (5)

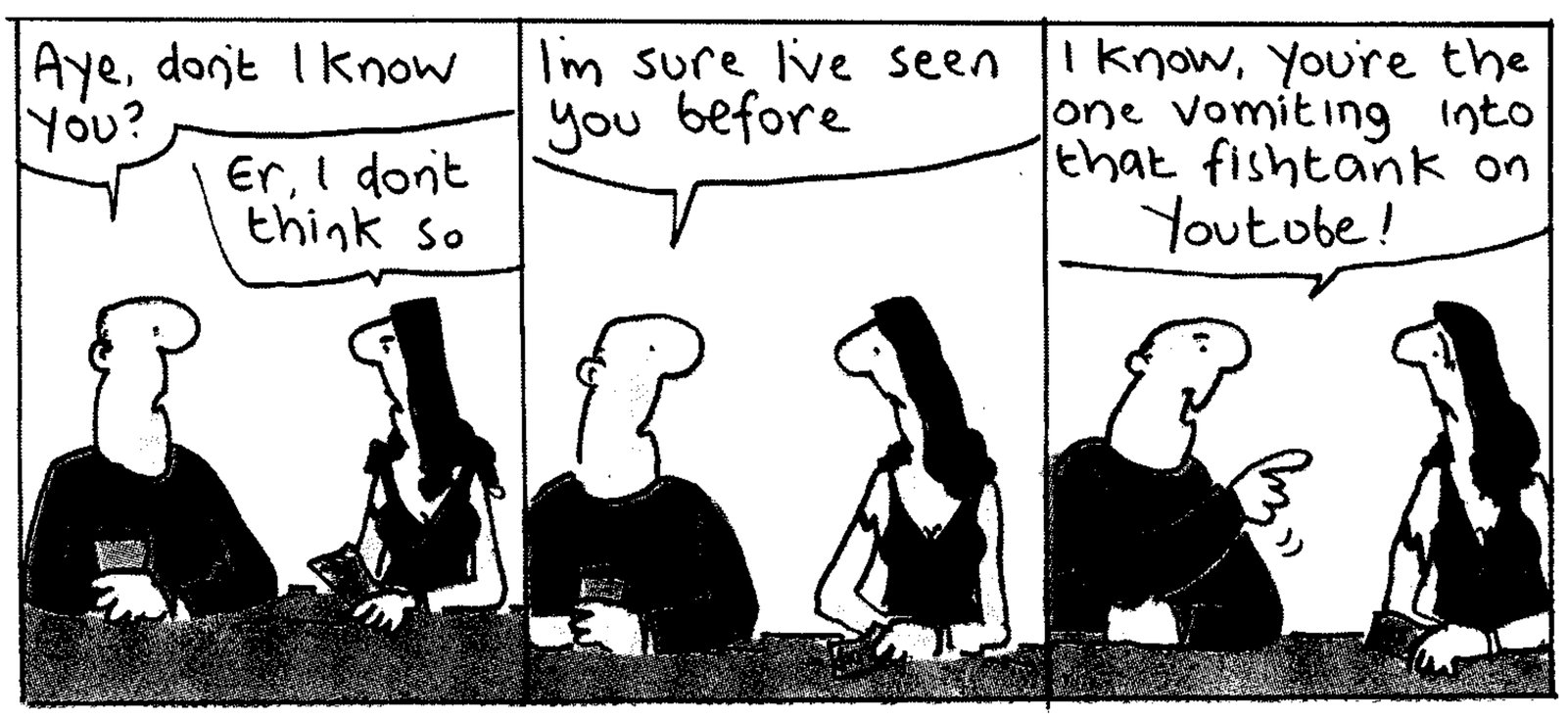
Crossword 331 winner: Juliet Molloy

ACROSS: 1 Broads 5 Wanks off 9 Black art 10 Vulgar 11 Haemorrhoids 13 Well-paid 14 Battle 15 Stewed 17 Exciting 19 Boris Johnson 22 Sputum 23 Criminal 24 Dr Jekyll 25 Ensign.

DOWN: 2 Rule 3 Alcohol 4 Stage hand 5 Watford 6 Never 7 Sell out 8 Fraudulent 12 Bent copper 14 Backslide 16 Whistle 17 Ethical 18 Tonsils 20 Jammy 21 Bang.



HUSBAND


Aye, don't I know you?
Er, I don't think so
I'm sure I've seen you before
I know, you're the one vomiting into that fishtank on Youtube!

Order your subscription *now* and we'll give you

THE NEXT TWO ISSUES ABSOLUTELY FREE

From March this year the saving on a PRIVATE EYE subscription will increase to 38% – saving you £15 over the year.

Treat yourself to a Private Eye subscription and SAVE 38%

- It's the UK's best-selling news and current affairs magazine
- "The original and still the best... The Eye never disappoints" *The Guardian*
- We'll guarantee that you'll never miss an issue
- It's only 92p a copy when you subscribe

PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT AND WE WON'T CHARGE YOU UNTIL MARCH

Subscription order form

Quote code: N1177

Yes! I would like to subscribe to PRIVATE EYE for 26 ISSUES and receive an EXTRA 2 ISSUES FREE

UK £24 Europe (Airmail) £32 Rest of World (Airmail) £38

❶ Your details: (for gift subscriptions – this is where we send the gift card)

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode Tel. no.

Email

Yes, I would like to receive news of other products and services from Private Eye that may be of interest to me.

❷ Gift subscription. Please send Private Eye to:

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode Tel. no.

❸ Payment details:

by Direct Debit – annually – please fill in the form opposite

by cheque made payable to PRIVATE EYE

by credit card. Please debit my Visa Mastercard Switch

Card number:

☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐

Valid from ☐☐☐☐ Expiry date ☐☐☐☐ Switch issue no ☐☐

Cardholder's signature_____ Date_____

You may cancel at any time and receive a full refund on outstanding issues. PRIVATE EYE is serious about protecting your privacy. We do not share or sell data about our subscribers.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

DIRECT Debit

Originator's reference 768299

Subscriber ref. no. (to be completed by PRIVATE EYE)

PEYE ☐☐☐☐☐☐

To the Manager (Bank/Building Society name):

Address

Postcode

Name(s) of Account Holder(s)

Signature(s)

Date

Branch sort code ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Account number ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions from some types of account.

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society: Please pay PRIVATE EYE Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with PRIVATE EYE and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

HOW TO ORDER:

Visit www.subsonline.co.uk

Call our order hotline 01795 414 870
(Mon to Fri 8.30am-8.00pm, Sat 9.00am-1.00pm)

Complete the order form and send with payment to:
PRIVATE EYE, PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA

OFFER ENDS 27 FEBRUARY 2007 **SOURCE CODE: N1177**

Can you imagine a future where no-one need fear cancer?

Where there's a Will, there's a way.

In the last ten years the death rate for people with cancer has fallen by 11%. That's thanks to people like you, who left gifts in their Wills to Cancer Research UK. These gifts have a huge impact on our life-saving work.

But the biggest impact is felt up and down the UK. Gifts left in Wills help make the progress which saves mums, dads, children, grandparents and friends.

Exciting times lie ahead – we are on the brink of major change. But we need your help to get there. If you are as determined as we are to stop cancer taking lives, please consider leaving a gift to us in your Will.

Together we will beat cancer

0207 121 6697
www.cancer.org.uk/legacies

CANCER RESEARCH UK

Registered Charity No. 1089464

Morgan

WAREHOUSE SURPLUS OUTLET

MAIL ORDER SALES LINE
0870 126 4831
www.morgancomputers.co.uk

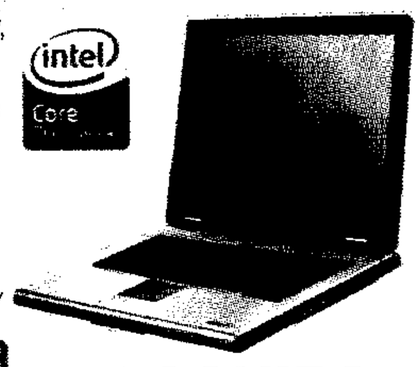
Stores in London, Birmingham and Manchester.
See below for store locations/opening hours.

TOSHIBA DUAL CORE NOTEBOOK

Sat Pro A120 with Dual Core technology, widescreen TFT, DVD±RW and WiFi.

- **Intel Core 2 Duo T5500 (1.66GHz)**
- **512MB DDR2 RAM, 60GB drive**
- **15.4" widescreen, 11a/b/g WiFi**
- **Win XP Pro - Free Vista upgrade**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year "money back" warranty



£499.99 ex VAT **£587.49** inc VAT

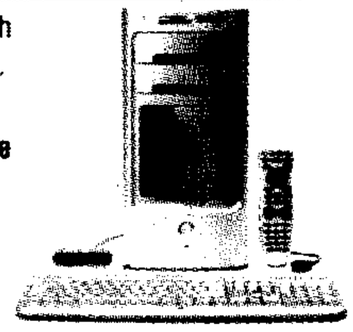
TOSHIBA

HP M7081 MEDIA CENTER

Top spec Media Center PC with 410GB storage & 256 graphics.

- **P4 540 (3.2GHz), 1GB RAM**
- **250GB hd, 160GB media drive**
- **7.1 sound card, TV/FM tuner**
- **11g WiFi, XP Media Center**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year HP warranty



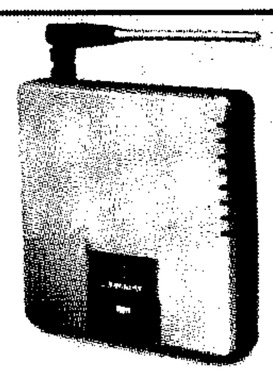
£399.99 ex VAT **£469.99** inc VAT

LINKSYS WIRELESS GATEWAY

11g wireless modem, router and firewall with SpeedBooster mode.

- **11b/g, up to 125Mbps data**
- **Suitable for ADSL2+ (25Mbps)**
- **4 x 10/100 Ethernet LAN ports**
- **64/128Bit WEP/WPA security**

Stock status: Factory refurb stock
Warranty: 1 year warranty



£24.99 ex VAT **£29.36** inc VAT

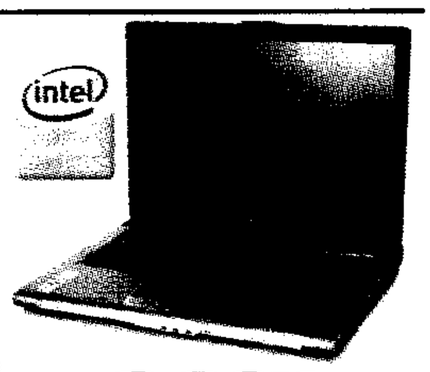
LINKSYS

ACER TRAVELMATE 2423

11g WiFi notebook with DVD writer, widescreen display and only 2.4kg.

- **Intel Celeron M370 (1.86GHz)**
- **256MB DDR RAM, 40GB hard disk**
- **14.1" widescreen, DVD±R/±RW**
- **56K/LAN/WiFi, Windows XP Home**

Stock status: Factory re-work stock
Warranty: 6 month warranty



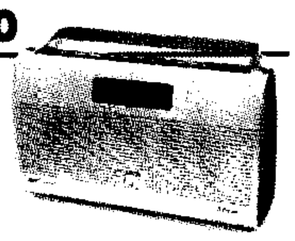
£279.99 ex VAT **£328.99** inc VAT

acer

PURE ELAN DIGITAL RADIO

- **Stylishly designed DX-20 DAB radio**
- **5 station presets, backlit display**
- **Portable - mains or battery powered**

Grade A refurb, 1 year warranty



£36.99 ex VAT **£43.46** inc VAT

LABTEC 6 PIECE SPEAKER SET

- **Ideal for video games and movies**
- **26.5W RMS output, powerful sub**
- **Volume and bass level controls**

Brand new stock, 1 year warranty

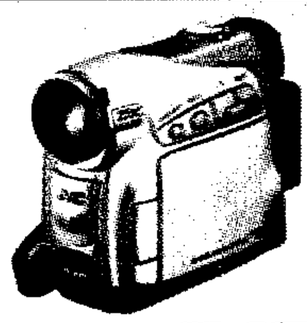
£16.99 ex VAT **£19.96** inc VAT

JVC MINI-DV CAMCORDER

GR-D240 digital camcorder with a huge 22x optical zoom lens.

- **Mini-DV for excellent quality**
- **2.5" rotating LCD display**
- **Night mode rec, Firewire port**
- **Scene modes/image effects**

Stock status: Grade A stock
Warranty: 6 month warranty



£99.99 ex VAT **£117.49** inc VAT

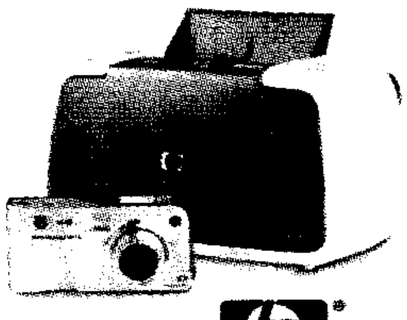
JVC

HP CAMERA/PHOTO PRINTER KIT

5 megapixel digital camera & easy to use portable 4" x 6" photo printer.

- **M415 camera with 3x optical zoom**
- **16MB memory, SD/MMC card slot**
- **Intergral charging dock in printer**
- **Watch photo slideshows on your TV**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year warranty



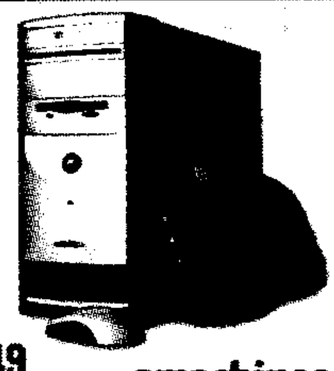
£99.99 ex VAT **£117.49** inc VAT

EMACHINES E3021 SEMPRON

Home office/family PC with DVD re-writer, Win XP and Works 8.0

- **AMD Sempron 3100+ (3.2GHz)**
- **256MB RAM, 100GB hard drive**
- **DVD writer, nVidia graphics**
- **Internet keyboard & mouse**

Stock status: Factory re-work stock
Warranty: 1 year warranty



£179.99 ex VAT **£211.49** inc VAT

emachines

MSI USB DIGITAL TV TUNER

- **HDTV Ready, compact/lightweight**
- **Watch and record digital TV**
- **EPG, inc software and ir remote**

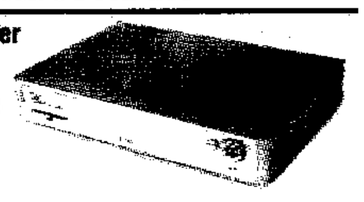
Brand new stock, 1 year warranty

£19.99 ex VAT **£23.49** inc VAT

ASTRATEC FREEVIEW RECORDER

- **80GB hard disk Freeview recorder**
- **8 day EPG, pause/rew live TV**
- **TopUp TV ready (card required)**

Brand new stock, 1 year warranty



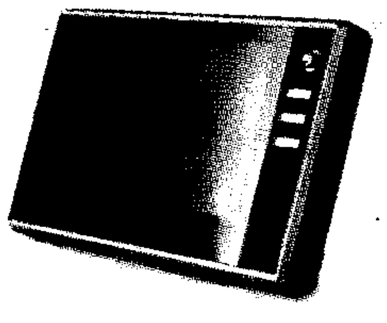
£74.99 ex VAT **£88.11** inc VAT

MSI PORTABLE FREEVIEW TV

Watch your favourite TV shows on the move plus SD slot for music/movies.

- **Large 4.2" TFT LCD, built-in aerial**
- **Li-Ion battery for up to 5 hours use**
- **Highly portable, weighs just 180g**
- **Inc IR remote, cables & charger**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year warranty



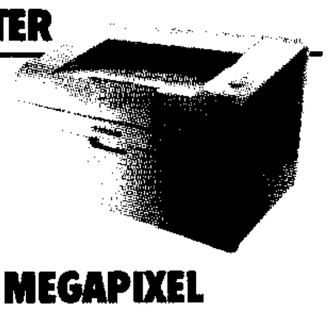
£85.09 ex VAT **£99.99** inc VAT

MSI

SAMSUNG LASER PRINTER

- **ML1610 - 16 ppm laser printer**
- **600 x 600 dpi res, 2MB memory**
- **150 sheet paper tray, USB port**

Brand new stock, 1 year warranty

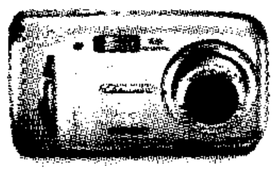


£49.99 ex VAT **£58.74** inc VAT

OLYMPUS FE-120 - 6.0 MEGAPIXEL

- **Compact camera with 3x optical zoom**
- **1.8" LCD screen, 16 scene modes**
- **14MB internal memory, xD card slot**

Grade A refurb, 1 year warranty



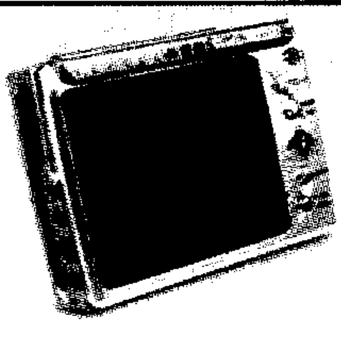
£59.99 ex VAT **£70.49** inc VAT

30GB MULTIMEDIA JUKEBOX

Portable digital music, photo, movie player and AV recorder.

- **Personal multimedia player**
- **2.4" display, VGA quality rec**
- **SD card slot, USB 2.0 port**
- **Inc Li-Ion battery & AV cables**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year warranty



£79.99 ex VAT **£93.99** inc VAT

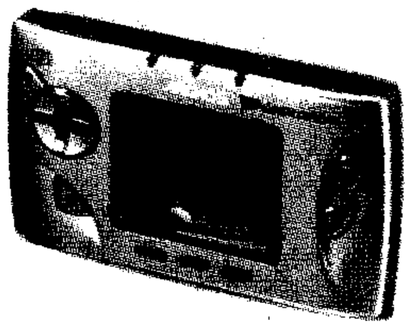
YUKAI

ARCHOS GMINI 20GB CAMCORDER

Compact digital camcorder, camera & multimedia player with 2.2" colour LCD.

- **20GB storage - up to 10,000 songs**
- **200,000 photos or 80 hours of video**
- **Bright display, multiformat playback**
- **High speed USB 2.0, weighs 160g**

Stock status: Brand new stock
Warranty: 1 year warranty



£109.99 ex VAT **£129.24** inc VAT

ARCHOS

0% MONTHS INTEREST FREE CREDIT ON ANY SALE OVER £400

SUBJECT TO STATUS, OVER 18'S, WRITTEN QUOTE UPON REQUEST

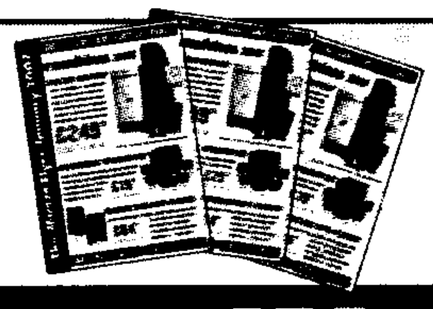
7" DIGITAL PHOTO FRAME

- **Widescreen digital LCD frame**
- **5-in-1 card reader & USB port**
- **MP3 music/MP4 video playback**

Brand new stock, 1 year warranty

£59.99 ex VAT **£70.49** inc VAT

TO HAVE A FREE COPY OF OUR FLYER DELIVERED TO YOUR DOOR EVERY MONTH PLEASE CALL 0870 126 4831



CENTRAL LONDON
64-72 New Oxford Street
London WC1A 1AX
Tel 020 7255 2115
Fax 020 7436 6285

GREENFORD
Unit 25 Derby Road
Metropolitan Ctr UB6 8UJ
Tel 020 8575 0055
Fax 020 8575 7985

BIRMINGHAM
34 Edgbaston Centre, Hagley
Road, Birmingham B16 8SH
Tel 0121 452 1141
Fax 0121 455 6855

MANCHESTER
Unit 11-12 Station Approach
Manchester M1 2GH
Tel 0161 237 1111
Fax 0161 237 3146

Monday-Friday	9.00am - 5.30pm
New Oxford St	10.00am - 6.30pm
Saturday	**9.00am - 5.00pm**
New Oxford St	10.00am - 6.00pm
Sunday	**10.00am - 4.00pm**
New Oxford St	12.00pm - 6.00pm

Maestro

Stock & prices subject to change. E&OE

The "Save My Facal" Pillowette is a revolutionary beauty and health product for the 21st Century. It helps prevent wrinkling, improves nasal air flow that permits increased oxygenation of the body, eases aches and pains, and aids in cosmetic surgery recovery.

The unique patented double crescent-shaped design supports the head comfortably while elevating the face during sleep or rest. This prevents compression of skin tissues and muscles in the face and forehead.

£40 - La Petite Pillowette
designed to be used by placing it on top of your existing pillow

£65 - Le Grande Pillowette
designed to replace or compliment your existing pillow

sales 0113 281 7799 web www.savemyface.co.uk

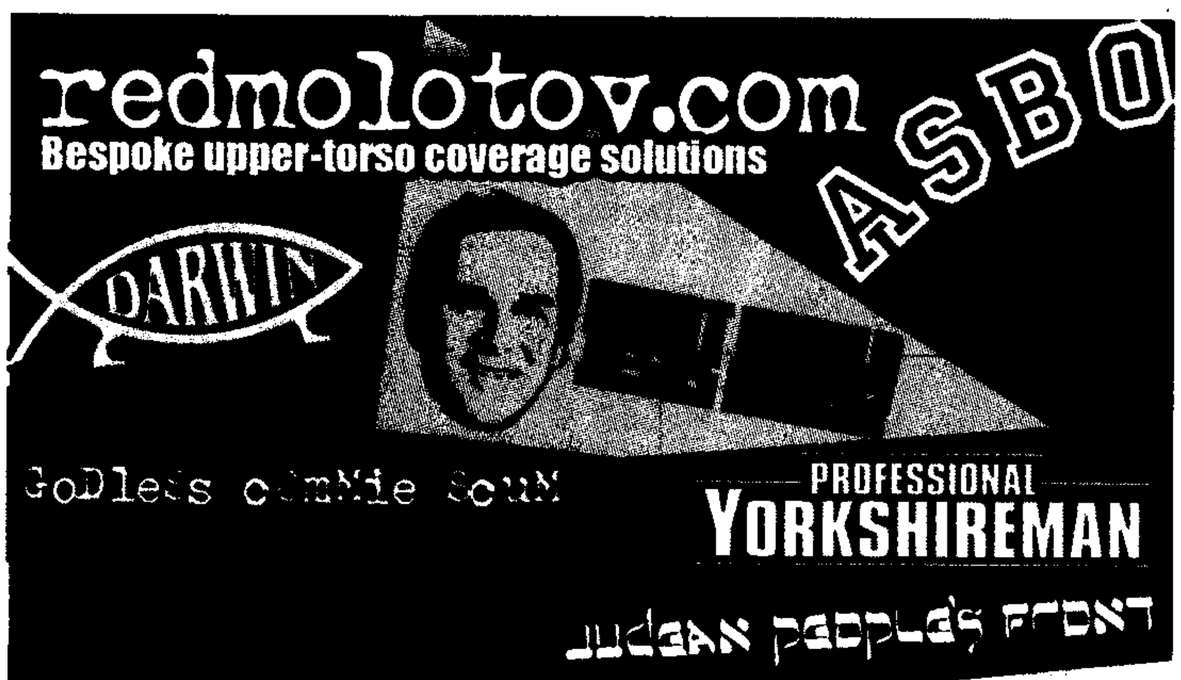
* choose your phone number

T-shirts from £17.99 (inc P&P) - see our full range at

WWW.TEEMARTO.COM

buy online or call 01276 488 000

redmolotov.com
Bespoke upper-torso coverage solutions


ASBO
DARWIN
GODLESS COMMIE SCUM
PROFESSIONAL
YORKSHIREMAN
JUDEAN PEOPLE'S FRONT
WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH
this t-shirt intentionally left blank
I LENT £250k TO TONY BLAIR AND ALL I GOT WAS THIS POXY PEERAGE
fat people are harder to kidnap
TAKE AWAY THE RIGHT TO SAY AND YOU TAKE AWAY THE RIGHT TO SAY THE DAMNEDEST
LENNY BRUCE 1925-1966
795400 750900

I AM NOT A TERRORIST
(I'm just bearded)

men's and women's t-shirts £14.99, long-sleeve t-shirts £16.99, kids' t-shirts £9.99

Terry Lane
THE FULL ROUND
the several lives and theatrical legacy of STEPHEN JOSEPH
duca della Corgna
£15 plus p+p
http://www.terrylane.it
info@terrylane.it
ISBN 88 901721 8 5

Humorous Speechwriter

www.brianjenner.com
Tel 01202 551257

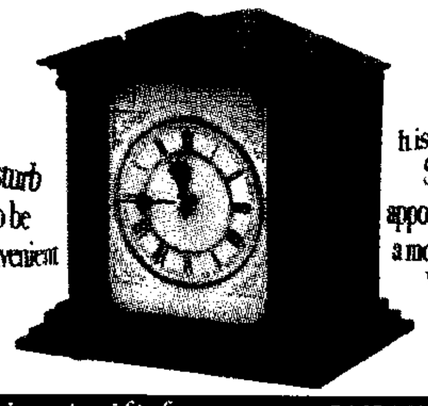
Lost out due to bad advice?

Why don't you sue your accountant/solicitor /surveyor?

Contact: GORVINS on 0800 015 9986 or email enquiries@gorvins.com

Stephen Fry. Your personal Jeeves. Every morning. Like clockwork.

Because we all like a little unsolicited admiration to help us into the day



Good morning Sir. I'm so sorry to disturb you but it appears to be morning. Very inconvenient I agree, Sir.

It is time to face the day. Shall I cancel your appointments, and book a month in the Seychelles? Very good, Sir.

The modern world's nicest gift for men WWW.VOCO.UK.COM

Private Eye Classifieds 020 7240 9129

Email: private-eye@tenalpspublishing.com

Fax: 020 7379 7118

£2.60 per word (£26 min charge). Centred box £15. Box number £15. All charges inc VAT.
Reply to Box number at: Private Eye, Ten Alps Publishing, 9 Savoy Street, London WC2E 7HR.

Would advertisers please note that copy date for February 16th issue will be 1pm Tuesday February 6th.

Art

www.artforums.co.uk Where artists meet on the internet.

PSSST. WANNA BUY A BANKSY? *Visit www.spitalfieldsartmarket.co.uk*

BEAUTIFUL, ORIGINAL PASTEL PORTRAITS of your loved ones and pets from photographs. www.indigofineart.co.uk

ORIGINAL LIFE DRAWINGS, male and female studies. www.signedbytheartist.net

Be My Valentine

LUXURY SILK NIGHTWEAR at www.pinkcamelia.com for gifts that women want! Next day delivery.

GIVE YOUR LOVE PINK FERRETS for Valentine's Day. Designer T-Shirts. www.pinkferret.co.uk

BARBARA, Nunc Eambus Domine, Bob Hwyl, Da Bo Chi, ILY, Sws, x

Eye Get Around

AH MEEEESTARE BOND. www.casin007.co.uk

Eye Wear Only

PUKKA PYJAMAS AND NIGHTSHIRTS for men, women and boys. www.pukkapyjamas.co.uk

Eye to Eye

LIFE CAN BE TREMENDOUS FUN. Woman would like to meet compatible man, 63 plus, who wants to go that extra mile. Reply Box 188358.

MISSION SURELY POSSIBLE?! Scotland. Funny, unpretentious, attractive, serious, intelligent, affectionate, vegetarian lady, very young 51, many interests – seeks tall, bright, stable, solvent, caring, childless, male vegetarian kindred spirit in Scotland. writehome@hotmail.co.uk

DON'T FORGET VALENTINE'S DAY

Love is in the Eye, so send your loved one a special message through our Eye Valentine' section

Call Robert on 020 7240 9129 to place your message in our Valentine's issue or go to www.eyeadvertise.co.uk

Copy deadline 1pm Tuesday 6 February

BEAUTIFUL, ELEGANT SWISS BLONDE, 60s, slim, fit, active. Seeks LT passionate, romantic partner. Photo / profile. jrh@rh-i.co.uk

STUNNING Swedish ex-model, 34, highly educated, affluent lifestyle, would like to meet equal. Photos / profile jrh@rh-i.co.uk

ENGLISH BEAUTY, seeking wealthy gent. For finer things in life, trips abroad and perhaps more. Email catchu@hotmail.co.uk

SELF-ASSURED, BUSTY black lady, 32, seeks gent 40+ in London for long-term relationship. Reply Box 190222.

DRAWING DOWN THE MOON, the introduction agency for thinking people: 75% of our joiners come as a result of a personal recommendation from a happy member. Ring now for a chat about fixing your happy ending! London & S.E. www.drawingdownthemoon.co.uk Tel: 020 7937 6263.

Eye Have a Title

TITLES - LORD, LADY etc. Tel/fax: 0800 652 6641. www.elitetitles.co.uk

CARICATURES DRAWN FROM PHOTOS and live at parties: www.caricatures.org.uk Tel: 020 8449 1368.

RUSSIAN AUTOMATIC WATCHES. Catalogue available (0115) 9827741. Or, visit www.russia4u.co.uk

FOUR OUT OF FIVE of our customers have committed suicide. The fifth still dances for joy. Be that person! www.studiobandz.com Your song recorded.

LOOKING FOR FUN GIFTS for Valentines Day? Check out; WWW.NAFFGIFTS.CO.UK

MAGIC CONJURING TRICKS: half price sale. Visit www.magicbypost.com

WHEN YOU WANT TO SAY SOMETHING SPECIAL, let a teddy deliver your message. (Same day despatch.) www.teddydelivery.co.uk

Eye Need Help

HAIR LOSS TREATMENT: free trial! Full details online @ www.multiflora.co.uk

Eye Escape

REAL ALES & GREAT WINES? Clear air, pure water and sheer enjoyment. Colwall Park Hotel in the Malvern Hills – Restaurant of the Year and AA Courtesy & Care Awards. Gourmet breaks from £79.00 pppn 2+ nights. Tel: 01684 540000. www.colwall.com

CAPE TOWN: Two-bedroom apartment directly on the beach overlooking table mountain, 5 minutes to waterfront. www.capetownbeachapartment.com

PRAGUE: 400-yr-old building in centre. Antiques, oil paintings, view. Tel: 0800 883 0467. www.castlesteps.com

CLASSIC CATALAN MASIA, Penedes wine region, stunning location! Visit www.dosroures.com

MARBELLA: Cute, central house with sun terrace. Sleeps 5. From £50 pppw. http://marbellahouse.freeyellow.com Tel: 07020 948 348.

PEACE ON EARTH: Tranquillity for all men (and women too) in the heart of the Bordeaux wine region; a haven for a holiday. Visit www.lemoulindulary.com

THE ULTIMATE LUXURY bolt-hole... www.waitbyschool.com

GOURMET COTSWOLD BREAKS from £69 pppn. www.wesleyhouse.co.uk

ROCK ACADEMY: Be a Rock Star in South West France, 16-19 May, 2007. Calling mature air guitarists and former wanabees with GSOH! www.beauvillearts.com

VALENTINE'S DAY romantic Tipi breaks. Gift vouchers for Summer 2007. www.pembrokeshiretipis.co.uk

LET'S ESCAPE THE RAT RACE to invest in large country property. Tel: 020 8445 6904.

VILLARS/GRYON: Pretty apartment in Alpine village, sleeps 2/3. Perfect for walking, skiing. Tel: 020 7820 8070 or email lynnecon@mac.com

Eye Read

'MARIO' the novel £8.49 inclusive. Alderman Publications, West Haddon, NN6 7AR.

BRITAIN, AN ISLAMIC STATE? 'Invasion', the new novel from thriller-writer DC Alden, charts the fall of Europe and the rise of a new Islamic super-state. The countdown has already begun. www.invasioneurope.com

WHAT IS LOVE? To find out see: www.what-is-love.co.uk

JOIN AN EXCLUSIVE CLUB / CULT. Read the books of Brian V Peck – Google me!

FREE FREE FREE FREE. www.bongerworld.co.uk You know it makes no sense.

FOND OF LATIN? Try www.latinisedhymns.org.uk

ADDICTIONS? No Big Deal – A Guide to Recovery from Addictions by John Coats. ISBN 0955367700. www.nobigdeal.org.uk

BUY 'THE DIET BOOK YOU'LL LOVE TO HATE' – only £3.50 – for more details email lucasshakespere@yahoo.co.uk

Eye Mean Business

PROFIT. Increase your profitability through better purchasing. info@horizon-associates.com

DETERMINED, TALENTED (folky), singer-songwriter requires financial backing. Have business plan, will negotiate profit share. details and demo: lawrenceoshea@hotmail.com

ZERO-TAX AVAILABLE since Manx 2006 Budget. For full details telephone 07624 459 989 or www.zero-tax.co.uk

BOOKMARK THIS. Rearrange your finances! Simply the best five interest rates for Deposits, Bonds, ISAs and credit cards. Visit www.moneyandmymoney.com

HOW TO MAKE GREAT FILMS on rock bottom budgets without going to film school!! Instruction manual and DVDs. £12.99 + p&p. Email: newcreations10@yahoo.co.uk or search ROB AGER on ebay or visit www.collativelearning.com

YOUNG, CREATIVE, DYSLEXIC, intelligent, logical thinker / doer seeks opportunity / job of a lifetime to enrich existences. Using-initiative@hotmail.co.uk

NEED REAL-TIME ACCESS TO YOUR BUSINESS? Email? Meetings? Contacts? Tasks? Server? Works with mobile phones, PDAs. Free trial. www.morethanemail.co.uk

Eye Law

YES, you can now come direct to a barrister. Tel: 020 7833 9625.

THE 'NO WIN – NO FEE' specialists: Professional Negligence (www.proneg.co.uk): Disputed Wills and Employment Law (www.sblaw.co.uk), Accident Claims (www.newdeal-fairdeal.co.uk). Free case assessment: 0808 155 6389.

BUYING PROPERTY IN BERLIN? Coming to Berlin for business? Qualified lawyer in Berlin can sort out most of your legal problems. Contact Rechtsanwalt Wilhelm Meyer. Tel: 0049 307 895 3595 Fax: 0049 307 800 1532. Email: wilh.meyer@t-online.de

Eye Spy

FACTORY SURPLUS computers and notebooks, printers, digital cameras, DVD etc, etc. www.morgancomputers.co.uk or call 0870 126 4830.

OLD PERSIAN RUGS – mostly £100-£3000. Shed not shop – telephone first. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. Tel: 01622 871 353.

WE DON'T NEED PARTY WHIPS to keep our prices in line. For expert advice on hi-fi, home cinema and flat screen TVs and the UK's cheapest prices... Guaranteed, check out Richer Sounds! Call 0845 900 1230 for your nearest store or check out www.richersounds.com

GIFTS FOR ACTIVE PEOPLE – runners, climbers, walkers, mountain bikers – www.antigee.co.uk

MOBILE/iPod? Don't get it nicked! Fit an ALARM to it! Only £5.00. Panda. Tel: 01386 462 058.

ORIGINAL PIRELLI CALENDARS - 1972 onwards: Some in original packaging. In excellent condition. Tel: 01892 862 777. Mobile: 07767 434 343.

PRIVATE EYE NUMBER 3, 30/11/61. In good condition for age. Only 500 printed. Pictures on request. Best offer secures. Email: 123som@blueyonder.co.uk

CANE FURNITURE? Wide range. Best prices. Quickest deliveries. www.michaelscane.co.uk Tel: 07756 517 967.

STYLISH NEW ELECTRIC BIKES from £350; mobility scooters / wheelchairs. Free colour brochures. Tel: 02890 838 111 anytime.

Eye Spy

JAMES BOND SINGLEHANDEDLY defends Britain's National Security, www.mi5.com/evidence/#britspy

ASK TONY BLAIR for referendum: England out of UK. http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/EnglandleaveUK/

MONTOYA: The next Arctic Monkeys? www.myspace.com/ThisIsMontoyaMusic

JUDICIAL REVIEW. Help us bring the Government to court. www.freedom2choose.co.uk

Eye Need

REPOSSESSION LOOMING? Considering bankruptcy? Call EJ&S on 01258 839 283. Visit www.ejands.co.uk

A BIRD IN THE BUSH is all I can afford. Can you spare a mattress? And a tent too? Great! Reply Box 187180.

DEDICATED MUM wishes to retrain providing Holistic Massage to corporate clients and from home. Any financial assistance would be greatly appreciated. Thank you. saintlybaby@gmail.com

DESPERATE FAMILY with two young children, moving house, needs £30K for URGENT repairs. Already struggling with mortgage and got outstanding debts. Please help. Thank you. NatWest, S/C: 50-30-20. A/C: 25555995. Email: salim01@tiscali.co.uk

NEED FUNDS to finish PhD to become an eel doctor! Thanks. S/C: 10-80-12. A/C: 09304848.

I NEED £3000 to publish my first novel. S/C: 51-50-10. A/C: 41400410.

STUDENT RADIO NEEDS MONEY for studio repairs. helpstudentradio@hotmail.co.uk S/C: 11-05-79. A/C: 01132319.

CRIPPLING CLINICAL depression has ruined my life and finances. Please help. notatallwell@googlemail.com or S/C: 08-91-04. A/C: 02184102. Desperate.

ACQUIRE GOOD KARMA. Genuine. Need money, please help. More information from galacticbutterfly@hotmail.co.uk

I'M SEEKING 5-10ha of land in Sussex to buy or lease to plant vines. Can you help? Simon: 01273 566 826.

HELP PLEASE. JERRY SADOWITZ is raising money to contribute to Mark Blanco's family's legal costs in discovering the truth surrounding his death. S/C: 40-22-26. A/C: 32507234.

SCHIZOPHRENIC in poverty trap needs £1500 for computer course. S/C: 20-49-76. A/C: 40196568.

TRYING TO KICK an expensive habit? Experience the purest high ever by helping an unlucky stranger instead. S/C: 60-02-38. A/C: 83597379.

CAN YOU HELP? I'm an unskilled, essentially useless young man (31). I am, however, desperate to have a job that I can enjoy. I am also polite, loyal, pleasant, intelligent. And tall. Not that that helps. Anything legal considered, especially if it's fun. London / Surrey. perkin2000@yahoo.co.uk www.myspace.com/perkin2000

YOUNG FEMALE CONCERT PIANIST seeks a grand or 10 grand to buy one. Reply Box 189451.

PHILANTHROPIST and carer needs £5000+ to continue work for others. Barclays, S/C: 20-27-27. A/C: 03717259.

LOCAL PEACE GROUPS require funds for advertising. S/C: 77-21-07. A/C: 32834960.

TUITION FEES £17K/year for VET course as already graduate, must quit farm job to study, genuine, please help. kiabyrne11@hotmail.com

SCOTLAND AGAINST CROOKED LAWYERS (www.sacl.info). Now registered as a political party and contesting Scottish Elections in May 2007. White Knights and Angels needed to help fund election campaign. Please support this noble cause. S/C: 82-69-04. A/C 10070154. Call Party Leader on 01835 864899.

SINGLE MUM WITH TODDLER. Desperate situation, £8,300 debt. Any help would be appreciated. S/C: 11-07-58. A/C: 00087210. Sincere thanks.

STRUGGLING ARTIST has to clean to make ends meet. Suffered severe trauma and mental illness. Would appreciate any help to pay off loan: Nationwide, S/C: 07-44-56. A/C: 20563875. Thank you.

Eye Services

DEBTS RECOVERED/PEOPLE FOUND. No trace, no fee. Former police detective, LLB (Hons) www.debtrecoveryuk.biz Phone 0870 888 8001.

SPEECH LOOMING? Relax, I'll write it for you! You're due to speak at a wedding / dinner / event. Don't waste time worrying. Lawrence: 07970 046 230 or www.greatspeechwriting.co.uk

STD POSTAL TESTING and treatment: Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea £45. Chlamydia, £25. Results emailed. www.DrThom.com

LINK INVESTIGATIONS: Private Investigators, Researchers, Genealogists. Tel: 01342 719361; Fax: 01342 719641. Email: info@linkinvestigations.co.uk Website: www.linkinvestigations.co.uk

CREDITORS THREATENING? Avoid bankruptcy / IVA. Confidential, discreet debt solutions. Call 0800 970 0750.

UNDERSTAND YOURSELF BETTER: Psychometric personality profile by MBTI practitioner. coach@elspethreid.com Tel: 020 8879 7676.

VAT PROBLEMS? Taxman on your case? Speak to Eamon McNicholas. www.EamonMcNicholas.com

RELATIONSHIP GONE SOUR? Feeling bored, misunderstood, unappreciated? Relationship therapy in London can help. www.relationship-therapy.co.uk

WRITING YOUR MEMOIRS / autobiography? Experienced editorial support. Bridget Holding, call 01830 867340. bridgetholding@dial.pipex.com

CONVERSATION GROUPS, classes, French, Spanish, English etc. Parties, restaurant trips. www.euroclub.co.uk

SAVE £££'s – service your own AGA in 20 minutes - www.serviceaga.co.uk

COMMISSION a personal history film of your (senior) relative, to be kept for posterity. Word of Mouth Films: 01902 576718. don.clark@wordofmouthfilms.co.uk

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS with a private mailing address. Secure and confidential. Choose from over 100 prestigious locations. Phone or email to check for mail – we can send it anywhere, any time. Great value starts from under £1 a day. Visit www.mbe.co.uk, call free on 0800 623 123 or email marketing@mbe.co.uk quoting ref PE1.

SLIDES/NEGATIVES onto CD / DVD. Digital photo restoration. Friendly, efficient service. www.digitiseyourphotos.co.uk

RITE ONN legal and law: Vicious, vindictive, contentious litigation with malice aforethought. No win, no fee, 1% of take. Tel: 01952 750 878.

Eye Contact

LONESOME OXBRIDGE BLUES? Why not meet somebody new at www.BluesMatch.com

RELIVE YOUR YOUTH – with my gentle touch. A mature lady seeks a lonely but interesting and entertaining gentleman to share a wonderful time. Tel: 07968 460 852.

LOVING LINKS. UK's leading discreet adult dating service since 1994: Unique top-level one-to-one matching service and fast online email system. Call David for a chat on 08456 440 919.

LUXURIOUS MASSAGE by experienced and fully qualified masseuse either in the comfort of own central London apartment or visiting service. Calls received after 11am on 07967 149 467.

www.nomorefrogs.com – smart matching for discerning daters! Your Frog-kissing days could be over...

THE EXCLUSIVE MATCHMAKING and partner head-hunting company for millionaires. Membership is only available to genuinely wealthy men and women with over £1,000,000 in liquid assets. Please visit www.seventy-thirty.com or call us on 020 7863 8880.

SPEED DATING FOR GROWN-UPS! Age 35+ with no upper age limit. February events: Cambridge 7th; London 14th; Bury St Edmunds 22nd; Brighton 28th. Book now online: www.kcdating.co.uk or telephone 01728 635064 and 07986 213120. Also, private client dating service.

To place your classified advert call 020 7240 9129

Wrinkle Free. Naturally.
FROWNIES®
No chemicals, no injections, no peels just a proven, mechanical process that smooths lines and creases while you sleep.
Frownies patches hold facial skin and underlying muscle in a natural, relaxed position.
Forehead & Between Eyes
or Corners of Eyes & Mouth
144 facial pads per box £18.50 inc. p&p
Sales: 0113 281 7711 www.frownies.co.uk

Have you got 4 or more?

esure only take on people with 4 or more years' no claims.
In fact, we are the only people to do so. It means our customers don't pay the price for other people's bad driving. And whilst we can't guarantee to provide you with a cheaper car insurance quote, because of our unique approach to car insurance thousands of new customers do save money by switching to us each month. We also make sure that we care for our customers, giving you the benefits you really want.

Up to 75% no claim discount
Get an immediate 65% no claim discount for 4 years of claim free driving, and 70% if you have 5 or more years. You can then earn up to a 75% discount if you stay claim free, to reward you for being a loyal customer.

Free courtesy car
If you're unlucky enough to have an accident, we'll arrange to pick up your car at a convenient time and if it's being repaired by one of our recommended repairers, we'll provide a free courtesy car.

Trustworthy repair network
We use reliable garages that are local to you and all repairs by our recommended repairers are guaranteed for 5 years (your statutory rights are not affected).

Free windscreen repairs
If you have a damaged windscreen that can be repaired, we'll get Autoglass to repair it, free.

If you'd like to find out why savvy motorists are choosing esure, call today on **0800 030 4447** quoting SC003 or get a quote at **esure.com**

esure®
car insurance

Subject to normal acceptance criteria. Not available in Northern Ireland or the Channel Islands. Calls may be monitored and recorded. EMBR17/1006

Car insurance Home insurance Pet insurance Travel insurance

It's anything but standard.

Our special 60th anniversary edition comes with up to £2,820* worth of impressive extras at no extra cost, including touch screen DVD satellite navigation, Bluetooth phone integration system and unique 17"alloy wheels. At Saab there's no such thing as standard thinking. **For more information call 0845 300 9395, text 'sixty' to 84464 or visit saabanniversary.co.uk**

Saab 93

SAAB

move your mind™

9 770032 888112 05 >

Anniversary package value of up to £2,820 based on Saab 9-3 Vector Sport 1.9 TiD (120bhp) Sport Saloon from £22,330 on-the-road. OFFICIAL FUEL CONSUMPTION FIGURES FOR SAAB 9-3 SPORT SALOON RANGE IN MPG (LITRES/100KM): URBAN 16.7-39.2 (7.2-16.9), EXTRA URBAN 39.2-64.2 (4.4-7.2), COMBINED 26.2-52.3 (5.4-10.8). CO_2 EMISSIONS IN G/KM: 147-259.